Why New Hampshire Changes Nothing THE EDITORS

Jed Perl on Walker Evans

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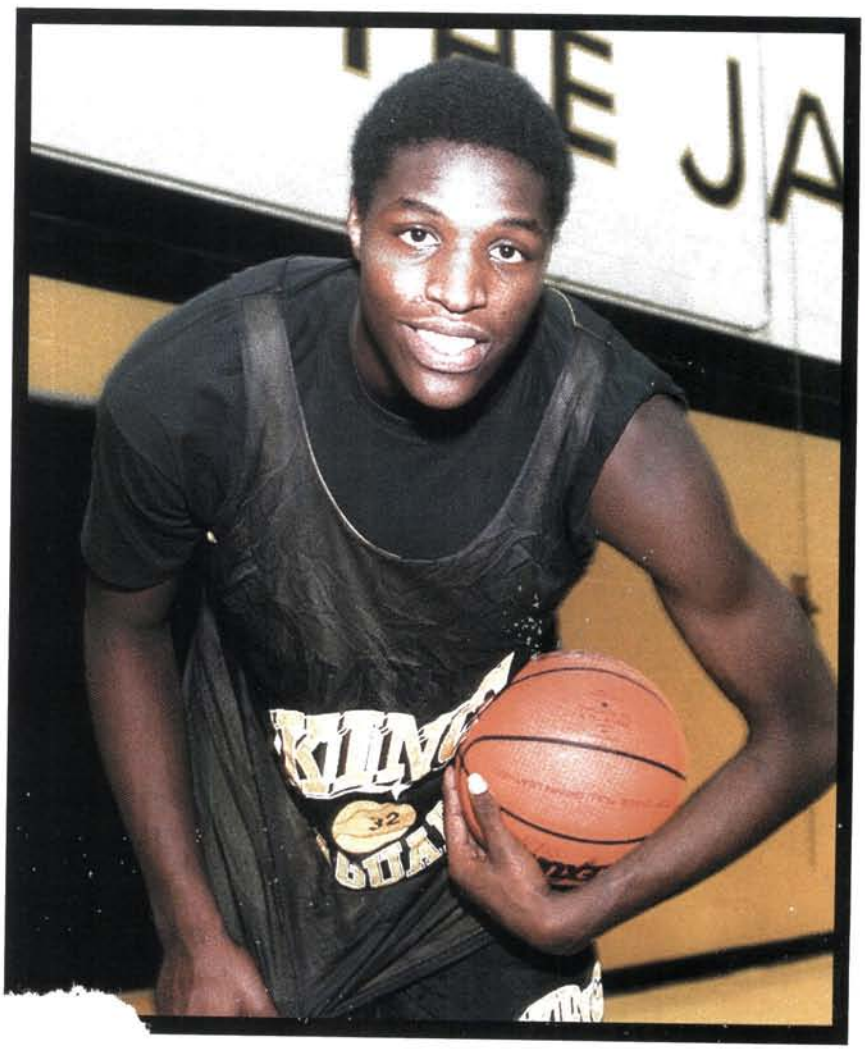
THE NEW REPUBLIC

FEBRUARY 14, 2000

The Legend of Leon Smith

A STORY ABOUT BASKETBALL IN AMERICA

BY DAVID GR...



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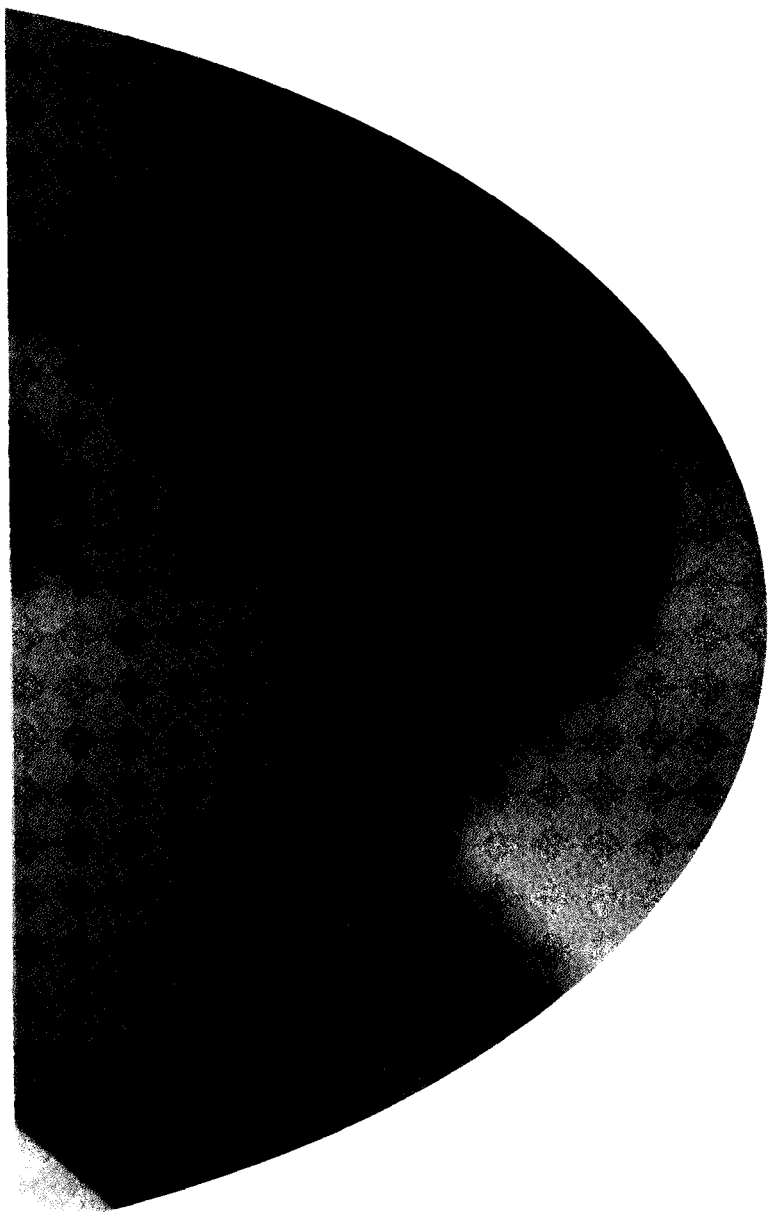

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On the Cover : Photo of Leon Smith by AP/CHICAGO SUN-TIMES
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Cautionary example

TO THE EDITORS:

Peter Berkowitz spends a long time arguing that Peter Singer is a mediocre philosopher who makes careless and ungrounded arguments and ignores major theoretical alternatives ("Other People's Mothers," January 10). He then concludes that Singer provides a "cautionary example" showing that philosophy has little to offer to our public life. This is a staggering non sequitur. If the first claim is correct (no comment), then nothing has been said to support the second. I challenge Berkowitz to make the same point in an essay on the work of Immanuel Kant, J.S. Mill, or John Rawls.

MARTHA NUSSBAUM
University of Chicago

Big sky

TO THE EDITORS:

As Florence Williams notes, Montana is not sharing in the prosperity of the rest of the nation ("Flight of Fancy," January 10). Due to lagging agriculture markets and embattled mining and timber industries, many Montana families are struggling to make ends meet. High-tech opportunities, like those presented by Rotary Rocket, the X-33, and the VentureStar, have real potential to offer high-paying jobs and community stability.

I am realistic about Montana's chances of becoming the Silicon Valley of the aerospace industry. While I do not share Williams's view that Great Falls is surrounded by "bleak plains"—the area has its own astonishing beauty—she is correct in at least one thing: that, in Great Falls and the rest of Montana, "livability is really a matter of expectations." Montana is not New York or Los Angeles, nor do we want it to be. What Montana lacks in big-city conveniences and luxuries we more than make up for in all manner of outdoor recreation, a reasonable cost of living, and good people.

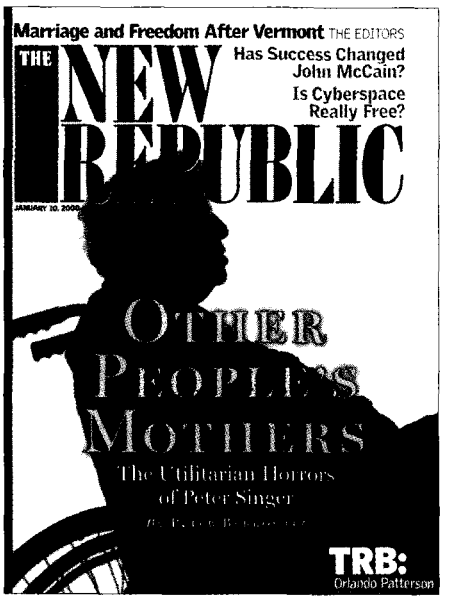
Additionally, Montana's open spaces and supply of skilled laborers do present unique potential to make the state a manufacturing, testing, and research center. I intend to pursue all opportunities that may lead to good jobs, happy families, and thriving communities.

CONRAD BURNS
United States Senator
Washington, D.C.

Giant L

TO THE EDITORS:

In his optimistic forecast of emerging



regional race-relations patterns, Orlando Patterson leaves out large chunks of U.S. geography—specifically, the burgeoning Rocky Mountain region, the Pacific Northwest, and much of the Southwest, including Texas ("Race Over," January 10). These regions have been the recipients of "diversity flight," the exodus of disgruntled West Coast whites, whom Patterson briefly mentions. Such demographic shifts may produce an alternative ethnic scenario: the Atlantic, Pacific, and Gulf coasts may become far more multicultural, while the heartland (especially a giant "L" formed by the Rockies, Texas, and the South) remains more homogeneous.

Furthermore, Patterson predicts that class divisions will eclipse racial and ethnic boundaries. Yet recent projections from the Rand Corporation and the California Policy Institute suggest that in California, at least, class and ethnic divisions will instead reinforce one another: Anglos and older Asian groups will be, relatively, well-educated and well-off, while most blacks and Latinos will remain disproportionately poor and less educated.

FREDERICK R. LYNCH
Associate Professor of Government
Claremont McKenna College
Claremont, California

United Kingdom?

TO THE EDITORS:

In "Blair Witched" (January 10), Jonathan Freedland makes an inaccurate claim in reference to Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, and London: "None of these large, distinct areas had previously enjoyed any measure of self-rule." This statement is contradicted by Freedland's own references to the previous existence of an independent Scottish parliament and the former Greater London Council. Scotland and England had separate royal families until 1603, when King James VI of Scotland also became King James I of England. Scotland retained its own parliament until 1707, when it received representation at Westminster. Wales ruled itself as a distinct nation until the late thirteenth century, but its independence was crushed in 1283. Northern Ireland was created and granted its own parliament by the Government of Ireland Act of 1920; the Protestant-dominated parliament lasted until 1972, when Britain imposed direct rule. There were some unsuccessful attempts at starting a new legislature for Northern Ireland, notably in 1973–1974, but direct rule remained in place until December.

Prime Minister Tony Blair deserves credit for decentralizing power to the Celtic regions and Greater London. However, in the case of London, he has not yet learned the lesson that when you decentralize in a democracy, the voters reserve the right to pick a mayor the central government dislikes.

JOSEPH E. RYAN
Bayonne, New Jersey

Altered egos

TO THE EDITORS:

Do tell Lee Siegel there are funnier fates than sharing a name with a similarly sapient writer ("The I's Have It," January 10). I, a reclusive dramatist, share my label with the conspicuous actor most famed as the "liquid metal" monster in *Terminator 2* that morphed into a sword in order to pierce lesser players. This actor is not listed in the Los Angeles phone book, as I am. My fans, if any, do not peruse that volume. His do, avidly, and from as far afield as Poland, Germany, and Japan, whose liquid-metal lovers telephone to beg me for, respectively, political asylum, film stardom, and "private personal souvenirs." They are uniformly resentful that I am not their handsome young idol and that I cannot supply his phone number.

The Internet's unstoppable search engines compound our confusion, attributing my books to him and his appearances to me. In addition, we have begun to be mixed up with yet more sharers of our name who report on astronomy, market men's woolen wear, and create movies that appear to star tanks, planes, and cars. Perhaps we should relax in the grip of the World Wide Web and morph together to write, star in, costume, produce, and

continued on page 49

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Medicare Reform— It's Not Just for Seniors

by Alan F. Holmer, President

You won't see cystic fibrosis on any list of diseases of aging— the average life expectancy of cystic fibrosis patients is 33. Yet the nation's 30,000 cystic fibrosis patients could be profoundly affected by the outcome of the current Medicare debate. That's why I care about this issue so passionately— both as president and CEO of an association representing research-based pharmaceutical companies and as a parent.

My son, Scott, and my daughter, Joy, both have cystic fibrosis. It's the most common fatal genetic disease in the United States, and it's a very cruel disease that clogs the lungs of its victims with suffocating mucous. When my son was born, my wife and I were told that he likely wouldn't live past 18. He's now 20, a college sophomore, and remarkably healthy— as is his 17-year-old sister. Just in my children's lifetimes, there's been a remarkable improvement in the treatment and outlook for cystic fibrosis patients. Why? In large part because pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies have developed new weapons against this disease.

They haven't cured it— yet. But the gene that causes the disease has been identified, and research looks very promising. Pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies are currently testing 11 more medicines for cystic fibrosis. I'm confident that a cure will be found in my lifetime. The more important question is: will a cure be found in time to help my children and thousands of other children like them?

The answer to my kids' life threatening disease may depend, in large part, on how we fix Medicare. Let me explain.

It takes hundreds of millions of dollars to discover and develop just one new medicine. In order to attract that level of investment— especially since the odds against developing a blockbuster drug are staggering— a company needs to be profitable. And under some of the plans proposed for Medicare, companies would be less profitable. That means they would attract less investment money that could be used to discover and develop new medicines. Would they just go out of business? Some smaller biotechnology companies might, but most large pharmaceutical companies would survive. Would they continue to develop new medicines? Of course. But some research projects would be shoved to the back burner, or shelved entirely. Maybe, just maybe, that would be the medicine my children are waiting for.

I realize that not everyone shares my concern about this particular disease. But just about everybody knows somebody with a disease that's crying out for a cure. A father with Alzheimer's disease. A daughter with juvenile rheumatoid arthritis. A sister with breast cancer. A friend with Lou Gehrig's disease. A neighbor or coworker with multiple sclerosis. Or maybe heart disease or stroke runs in your family and you're hoping for a cure before the disease strikes you.

Pharmaceutical companies are doing research on all of these diseases and more. Which of these research projects would you like to see pushed to the back burner?

PhRMA

Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America

It's a tough question. And if any of the proposed Medicare plans that involve price controls are passed, pharmaceutical companies would have to make some tough decisions.

I hope it never comes down to that. And it won't if Congress passes the plan that gives seniors access to the best medicines, while keeping the incentives for research strong. The bill currently on the table that would do this best is S.1895, a common-sense plan recently introduced by Senators Breaux, Kerrey, Frist and Hagel—two Democrats and two Republicans. This legislation would let seniors choose among competing private-sector plans, just as millions of working Americans, including members of Congress, do now. The government would pick up most of the premium, and low-income seniors would get special help. These plans would use market competition— not price controls— to improve quality and control costs. That means that the incentives for pharmaceutical research would remain strong. Which would be good news for my children, and your fathers and sisters and friends, and everybody who has or will ever get an uncured disease.

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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

Net Worth

"This transition is like what happened with telephones, and it's becoming clear to me that a whole lot of people will be left out," said Garrett Gruener, a Silicon Valley venture capitalist who is one of the people working on a solution to the problem.
—*The New York Times*, January 27, 2000

GARRETT GRUENER IS worried about the "digital divide," the gap between "information haves" and "information have-nots." He cofounded ClickStart, a program to help low-income families get online. If President Clinton gets his budget wish list, ClickStart and other nonprofits will get $50 million in government money in the coming years to provide poor families with computer hardware and software, as well as Internet access. "We have got to do this, and do it quickly," Clinton said last week in his State of the Union address, pushing his various digital-divide programs.

I suppose I can think of worse ways to spend $50 million. But I can definitely think of better. And that's because many of the premises underlying the digital-divide crusade are wrong. The current transition is not really like "what happened with telephones," and there is little chance that "a whole lot of people will be left out"—certainly not the urban poor, the poster children for this campaign.

What happened with telephones was that they allowed you to talk with other people. What is happening with the Internet is that it allows you to, among other things, download music, see pictures of naked people, and get free trial copies of that Columbine classic video game, Doom.

True, the Internet also, like the telephone, helps you talk with other people. It even offers educational resources that many low-income households lack, such as the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (not to mention such edifying sites as *www.tnr.com*). But I'm guessing that most low-income teenagers are going to spend very little of their online time browsing through the *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

This prediction is based on years of empirical research—my own adolescence—paired with the assumption that poor kids spend their time no more wisely than my middle-class friends and I spent ours. The menu of choices we faced during our free time ranged from (a) visiting the public library to (b) buying a case of Lone Star beer, going to the drive-in, and watching *The Swinging Cheerleaders*. I don't recall ever visiting the public library.

And technology is now tilting the menu further toward the drive-in-movie end of the spectrum. The Web is going broadband, so more and more people will get real-time video by modem. I don't doubt that the new, fat-pipeline Web will eventually offer advances in education. When you combine video with interactivity and a potentially infinite number of channels, great things are bound to happen. Eventually. But America's capital markets have so far put a lot more money into the technological evolution of thrills than the technological evolution of insights. (I've been saving my money for a Kant.com IPO, but I'm starting to wonder....) In the short run, if not the long, broadband will make the Internet less a medium of communication, less a medium of education, and more a medium of entertainment. (Hence one better way to spend that $50 million: subsidies for research in interactive video education.)

As the Web becomes more of an entertainment medium, poor people—like people generally—will need less encouragement to get online. But how will they afford it? Cable-TV executives asked that same question two decades ago. They were reluctant to wire inner-city neighborhoods and often had to be prodded by local governments. But it turned out that low-income people not only ponied up for the bare-bones monthly service; they went for the expensive premium channels, too.

The things that attracted them—movies, sports, pornography—will be orders of magnitude more available on the Web than on cable television. Assuming regulators keep things competitive, the price of broadband will soon be comparable to that of cable—especially in high-density areas, such as the neighborhoods of the urban poor.

But concern about educating the young is only one aspect of the digital divide. We are also told that adults need at least narrowband Internet access to send e-mail and check online job listings. Maybe so. But, if they'll put up with extra ads, they can get narrowband access for free from such sites as *www.juno.com* and *www.netzero.com*. What's wrong with that?

Plenty, say digital-divide worrywarts. Daniel Ben-Horin, head of a group called CompuMentor, told *The New York Times*, "Historically, the poor are the most susceptible to advertising generally, the least able to afford to navigate the perils of our consumerist culture and the most prone to being misled by dishonest advertising." But advertising pervades the Web whether or not you're getting extra doses of it in exchange for free access. If Ben-Horin's paternalistic fears are valid, then any bridge across the digital divide will just lead poor people into consumerist quicksand.

Though subsidizing household Internet access makes little policy sense, it does have political logic. It not only appeals to low-income voters but pleases Silicon Valley do-gooders—while subsidizing Silicon Valley. Under the ClickStart program, for every $60 per year a poor household paid for hardware, software, and bandwidth, the government would throw in $120. It's hard to say how much of that money would find its way back to the high-tech companies whose executives are volunteering to help close the digital divide, but that number definitely isn't zero.

To be fair, the case for making sure schools, as opposed to households, are online has real merit. In schools, teachers can filter the Internet and monitor its use. They can also teach kids how to program computers and design Web pages—skills much less likely to be learned on a Friday night at home. If the phrase "digital divide" gets Congress to put a few more dollars into public education, that's fine.

On the other hand, once you start thinking about how badly the schools need the money, you get a bit impatient with this whole approach to public policy: lots of dinky, feel-good programs that seem designed mainly to gratify Democratic interest groups. The public schools won't be saved by dinky programs. If the schools aren't overhauled soon, voucher mania will reach critical mass and start to seriously erode their tax base (assuming the Supreme Court doesn't void vouchers).

Of course, one problem with trying to save the public schools is that you can't do it without antagonizing a big Democratic interest group: teachers' unions. For starters, you'd have to end the ridiculous education requirements that confine thousands of smart and committed teachers to private schools.

A Democratic president willing to take on the teachers' unions could propose a grand bargain with Republicans: pour lots more money into the public schools, including teachers' salaries, but only if the unions relax their grip on the hiring (and firing) process. The first step toward bridging the real digital divide is to make poor kids better at using digital information, such as numerals and letters.

ROBERT WRIGHT

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Intro to 19th Century Literature; Balzac, Pere Goriot; Austen, *Pride & Prejudice;* Dickens, *Bleak House;* Melville, *Moby Dick;* Bronte, *Jane Eyre;* Flaubert, *Madame Bovary;* Tolstoy, *The Death of Ivan Ilych;* Ibsen; *Strindberg;* Conrad, *Heart of Darkness;* Mann, *Death in Venice.*

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Intro to 20th Century Literature; Kafka, Short Stories; Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past I & II;* Joyce, *Ulysses;* Woolf, *To The Lighthouse;* Faulkner, *The Sound & the Fury; Absalom, Absalom!;* Sartre, *Nausea;* Camus, *The Plague;* Beckett: Drama of Alienation.

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They Only Look Alive

FORGET JOHN MCCAIN—the biggest winner in the New Hampshire primary was the media. Terrified that George W. Bush and Al Gore would sew up their parties' nominations before the snow melted, sentencing the Fourth Estate to a breathtakingly boring six-month non-campaign, journalists went to bed last Monday night with their hands clasped skyward and the words "McCain-Bradley upset" on their lips. When the challengers did better than expected, the press duly paid homage to the miracle before them, investing the events of February 1 with world-historical significance. The New York *Daily News*'s Lars-Erik Nelson called McCain's win "one of the most stunning political upsets in the nation's history and one of the most important." On *The Washington Post*'s op-ed page, William Kristol pronounced the "old order" dead and breathlessly heralded "a new politics for the new millennium."

Gentlemen, stop your engines. New Hampshire is just New Hampshire. It puts the fear of God into front-runners almost every presidential election year, and almost every year those front-runners right themselves a few states later. And this happens for a reason: New Hampshire is politically weird. Its Democrats aren't much like other Democrats, and its Republicans aren't much like other Republicans. And the things that make them unusual are precisely the things that make them uniquely hospitable to candidates like Bill Bradley and McCain.

Look at New Hampshire's demographics and two facts jump out. First, its citizens are remarkably well-off. New Hampshire ranks thirteenth in the nation in median income. Second, New Hampshire's citizens are unusually well-educated. These facts matter because the well-off and the well-educated worry less about bread-and-butter issues and more about ethereal concerns such as probity in government and ethical conduct on the stump. It's among these voters that Bradley's above-the-fray demeanor and McCain's straight talk play best. What's more, New Hampshire shares with its Yankee neighbors a historical predisposition to high-minded appeals and reformist crusades. It's no coincidence that three of the four states to pass public-financing initiatives are in New England.

But New Hampshire doesn't have many of the ideologically driven activists who dominate primaries in much of the rest of the country—people for whom outcome trumps process. Social conservatives, the GOP rank and file in much of the South and Midwest, are a virtual nonentity in the Granite State. Hence Tuesday's meager showings—six percent and one percent, respectively—for Alan Keyes and Gary Bauer. In New Hampshire, McCain's persistent waffling on abortion didn't hurt him a bit. In South Carolina and Michigan, it will.

Similarly, on the Democratic side, the labor machine that Gore rode to victory in Iowa—and which he will surely rely on elsewhere—is weak in New Hampshire: only eleven percent of Granite Staters are unionized, compared with 14 percent of the nation as a whole. Moreover, New Hampshire is 97 percent white, and Gore trounces Bradley among African Americans. Just as McCain's "I will tell you when I disagree" message doesn't work with religious conservatives, because they care more about the substance of those disagreements than about his honesty in acknowledging them, minorities and union members aren't attracted to Bradley's anti-pandering image. After all, pandering never seems so bad when it's directed at you.

Of course, frustration with politics as usual exists everywhere. But, outside New Hampshire, it's more likely to be drowned out by concerns about the economy, health care, education, or Social Security. In a recent Fox News poll, two-thirds of national voters ranked one of those issues as their most important political concern. And campaign finance reform, the cornerstone of the Bradley and McCain campaigns? Just one percent.

For McCain and Bradley to win in the states to come, they will have to beat their opponents on policy, not just process. And that's unlikely. McCain is disliked by social conservatives, and he still defers many substantive questions by saying that campaign finance reform will make the solutions obvious. Bradley, for his part, did well in the meta-debate—newspapers agreed that Gore was distorting his record. But on the issues themselves—particularly health care—polls showed him losing.

The reality is that Bush and Gore remain huge favorites to win their parties' nominations—not simply because of money and endorsements but because they have fashioned candidacies based upon the interests of the people who most often vote in Democratic and Republican primaries. The media can celebrate that reality or bemoan it, but they can only ignore it for a little while. Journalists should savor their victory in New Hampshire. It's likely to be their last. ■

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NOTEBOOK

ARMS AND THE IRA: Northern Ireland's Good Friday peace accord is on the verge of collapsing, a victim of reality. The agreement was based on a simple premise—both sides, Republican and Unionist, would disarm and share political power in a devolved Ulster government. Despite massive skepticism from his own ranks, David Trimble, leader of the Ulster Unionists, kept the agreement alive by giving Sinn Fein and the Irish Republican Army every benefit of the doubt as the deadline for final disarmament approached. But the IRA has never been interested in the democratic process; and Sinn Fein has never been able to fully distinguish itself from the IRA. For all his public relations prowess, Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams still owes his power to a small group of professional terrorists armed with tons of explosives and machine guns. These terrorists have made it clear they have absolutely no intention of disarming—now or ever. The Blair government and the Clinton administration have bent over backward to avoid this awful fact, since it would imply that a "peace process" in Ireland involving the IRA is a farce. But the farce is now inescapable. It's sad to say, but there's only one option left on the table: The short-lived Ulster government should be disbanded and the blame placed squarely on the shoulders of the IRA. Maybe that will induce Sinn Fein to talk seriously to its murderous sponsors. Or, better still, to dump them.

WARD HEALER: John McCain's victory in New Hampshire wasn't the religious right's only defeat last week. In California, a handful of Republicans led by Ward Connerly took a public stand against Proposition 22, the March 7 ballot initiative that would proactively ban equal marriage rights for gays and straights in the largest state in the union. "As a conservative, I value commitment and responsibility," said Connerly, chair of the Proposition 209 campaign, which in 1996 struck down race- and gender-based preferences in California. "I also believe government should not intrude in people's private lives. That is why conservatives should oppose Prop 22." Joining Connerly in these sentiments were the Republican mayors of San Diego and Laguna Beach and California Representative Tom Campbell. "As Ronald Reagan led the GOP to help crush the Briggs Initiative [to fire gay teachers] in 1978, we can and should appeal to our better angels to stop Proposition 22," said Connerly. "These intrusive initiatives are not in the best interest of the state of California." Connerly is a rare breed these days: a conservative who's actually consistent. His opposition to dividing Americans by race and gender is of a piece with his opposition to reserving marriage rights for one group of citizens while excluding another. No word yet from the many conservatives who championed Connerly when he opposed affirmative action but find his support of gay equality unsettling. Why are we not surprised?

GUESS WHO'S COMING TO LUNCH: Last week came the news that Thomas Jefferson had probably fathered more than one child with his slave Sally Hemings. According to a DNA study conducted by the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation, it's likely that Jefferson fathered all six of Hemings's children. What's a mere six children in the grand scheme of history? Quite a lot, actually. Let's do the math. Of Hemings's six children, four lived to adulthood: Harriet, Beverly, Eston, and Madison. Little is known about Harriet and Beverly, both of whom assimilated into white society and more or less disappeared without a trace. But we do know about the other two. Eston—who, until last week, was presumed to be Jefferson's only child with Hemings—had three children; Madison had twelve, five of whom had children of their own. Assuming a new generation begins every 20 years, since then there have been eight generations. For Eston's line, which has been fairly well-documented due to the long-held belief that he was Jefferson's son, there are today eleven known descendants. The documentation of Madison's line is not as complete. But, making the reasonable assumption, based on figures from those eras, that members of each of the first four generations after Madison's children had four children apiece and that members of each of the most recent three generations had two children apiece, it's mathematically possible that a whopping 5,120 people today could claim Madison as a blood relative. Says Cinder Stanton, the senior research historian at the Jefferson Memorial Foundation, "Good lord, we have a lot of people to find." It's not clear whether the Monticello Association, which represents some 700 descendants of Jefferson and his wife, Martha, will help with the search; the group currently doesn't admit Hemings's descendants into its ranks. Last year, though, in a gesture of goodwill, Monticello Association member Hugh Jefferson Randolph invited 34 of Hemings's descendants to the annual Jefferson family reunion. As this year's reunion approaches—and Hemings's descendants continue to come out of the woodwork—Randolph may want to throw a few more dogs on the grill.

PUBLIC SERVICE: Bill Bradley prides himself on being the most reticent of the presidential candidates. While Al Gore and George W. Bush were going out of their way to praise Jesus—naming him a top political adviser and a "favorite philosopher," respectively—Bradley refused to broadcast his spirituality. "I've decided that personal faith is private, and I will not discuss it with the public," he said. He won't even reveal his favorite book. "I'd rather not go down that road," Bradley told one inquiring reporter. Similarly, Bradley's wife, Ernestine Schlant, has eschewed revealing personal details. "Please let us have some privacy!" she barked at a reporter who asked about the couple's wedding anniversary. Fair enough—the expectation that candidates must dish up intimate details is among the many unfortunate residues of the Clinton presidency. So it's depressing that Bradley, in the final days of the New Hampshire campaign, threw principle overboard in a blatant pander. On the stump and again in an interview with Lifetime Television, a network aimed at women, Bradley touted himself as pro-woman. (He trails Gore among the fairer sex.) The evidence: his sensitiv-

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ity to the problem of breast cancer, stemming from his wife's own bout with the disease, and his role as "house mom" to their daughter. "Women should vote for me," Bradley declared, "because I walk my talk." We liked him better when he talked less.

AN EXCERPT FROM THE JANUARY 26 REPUBLICAN DEBATE IN MANCHESTER, NEW HAMPSHIRE:

GEORGE W. BUSH: What's it like to be in a mosh pit?

ALAN KEYES: It's a lot of fun, actually. I enjoyed it....

BERNARD SHAW: Mr. Bauer, for Mr. Keyes....

GARY BAUER: Al, let me read a quote from you. You said that one of the most important things is the dignity of the presidency. In fact, you said that it's important that those of us that aspire to be president not act like guests on "The Jerry Springer Show," which is incompatible with the dignity of politics.... [N]obody made you jump in the mosh pit. Do you think that's consistent with ...

KEYES: Oh, that's very true.

BAUER: ...do you think that's consistent with the dignity of the presidency?

KEYES: Well, I would leave that to the judgment of the American people. I do know that, when I got down, one of the folks who was there with one of the news crews looked at me and he said, "You know, you're the only person I've ever seen dive into a mosh pit and come out with his tie straight." And I think that—you know, the real test of dignity, the real test of dignity is how you carry it through hard times. I think I learned that from my people. We went through slavery when we didn't have the outward signs of what others would call dignity. Because we understood that dignity comes from within, and that whatever circumstance you are going through, you can carry that dignity with you and no one can take it away. So, I think you may have a misunderstanding of dignity. It doesn't come from what you do in a mosh pit. It comes from what you do as a result of the convictions of your heart. And I'll leave it to the American people to judge the convictions of my heart. ■

VINT'S WEEK

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Kashmir Dispatch

Islamabad Guys

By PETER BERGEN

WHEN KASHMIRI SEPARATISTS hijacked an Indian Airlines flight last December, winning the release of three comrades from Indian jails, the world was horrified. But horror does not quite describe the reaction in Muzaffarabad, the damp, scraggly hill town on the Pakistani side of Kashmir that serves as the headquarters of Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, or HUM, the group U.S. officials say was probably behind the attack. A more appropriate word might be jubilation. As I drove into town a week after the hijacking, I passed signs welcoming the freed militants home and offering GREETINGS TO THE GREAT MUJAHIDEEN.

With the United States publicly threatening to place Pakistan on its list of states sponsoring terrorism—triggering sanctions that would further harm the country's faltering economy—the Pakistani government has emphatically distanced itself from the hijacking. The country's military ruler, General Pervez Musharraf, said last month that "[w]e are absolutely and totally against terrorism in any form ... if any group is involved in terrorism, I accept that this will not be allowed from the soil of Pakistan." But interviews with Kashmiri militants in Muzaffarabad and elsewhere tell a different story. While the exact level of coordination between Pakistani authorities and the Kashmiri separatists remains unclear, the government's support of the movement is undeniable. Some 15 avowedly militant groups operate openly in Pakistan. Even as the hijacking has heated tensions between India and Pakistan to a boil, Kashmir's militants vow still more attacks.

HUM has its headquarters in a white-walled villa in a suburban neighborhood. When I arrived, a phalanx of jeeps and pickup trucks were parked outside. Inside, perhaps a dozen young men armed with AK-47s milled about. One took me to see a senior official, a burly man in his late twenties dressed in a camouflage jacket and a brown woolen hat. The official—who asked to remain anonymous—ushered me into a room decorated with pictures of tanks, machine guns, and rocket-propelled grenades. There he launched into what would become the standard icebreaker during my meetings with Kashmiri militants: an interminable, blow-by-blow disquisition on the history of the Kashmir conflict.

Here's the abridged version: Kashmir, a Utah-size region split between India and Pakistan, has been disputed since the two nations gained independence from Britain in 1947. Most of Kashmir lies on the Indian side of the border, but the majority of Kashmiris are Muslims, and many wish to secede from predominantly Hindu India. These secessionist sentiments have been further fanned by the Indian army's frequent human rights violations in the region. Over the past five decades, India and Pakistan have fought two full-blown wars, in 1947 and 1965, over Kashmir. The latest flare-up began in the late '80s—partly because of frustration over Indian-rigged elections and partly because the end of the war against the Soviets in Afghanistan freed up veterans for another jihad. HUM, for instance, was originally founded in 1985, in part as an Afghan mujahideen group under the name Harkat-ul-Ansar. In 1997, after the State Department put Harkat on its list of terrorist organizations, the group changed its name to Harkat-al-Mujahideen. (The HUM official claimed this was just a coincidence and that the name change was prompted by an internal dispute.)

Notwithstanding its terrorist designation, HUM's activities—like those of other Kashmir separatists—had until recently been relatively minor. But in 1999 that changed. In May, a combined force of Pakistani soldiers and Kashmiri militants—including, according to the official, members of HUM—seized strategic mountain positions in the Kargil region, in Indian-held Kashmir, and fought off Indian assaults for two months. In October, Musharraf, who had presided over the Kargil operation, toppled the government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, which had ignominiously retreated from Kargil. Then, over Christmas, the Indian Airlines plane was hijacked, forced to land in Afghanistan, and used as a bargaining chip to secure the release of three Kashmiri radicals imprisoned in India.

No group has claimed responsibility for the hijacking. But the hijackers' principal demand was the release of Maulana Masood Azhar, a fiery cleric who is an important HUM ideologue. It's no surprise, then, that U.S. officials believe HUM was behind the attack. When I asked the HUM official whether his group was responsible, he would not answer directly. But his sympathies clearly lay with the hijackers, because "they internationalized the Kashmir issue." He was more open about HUM's future plans, noting that, since Kargil, the group has formed *fidayeen*, or martyr squads, to send into India on suicide missions.

AND HUM ISN'T the only group putting together such squads. Another is Tehrik-e-Jihad, whose leader lives not far from HUM's headquarters, on another quiet Muzaffarabad street. Salim Wani is a handsome, charismatic, 40-year-old father of three who speaks perfect English. I met with him several hours after my visit to HUM headquarters. Unlike the HUM official, Wani was dressed not in military fatigues but in a simple jogging suit, with a wool shawl draped around his shoulders for warmth. He received me in a room decorated with carpets and a few chairs. Over tea and cakes he told me how he came to be a Kashmiri militant.

Born on the Indian side of Kashmir, Wani attended Kashmir University in Srinagar, where he majored in economics. In 1988 he joined Kashmiri college students in anti-Indian protests. The government responded with a severe crackdown, and Wani fled to Pakistan. "My house was gutted, my

PETER BERGEN, a broadcast and print journalist based in Washington, D.C., is writing a book about jihad movements.

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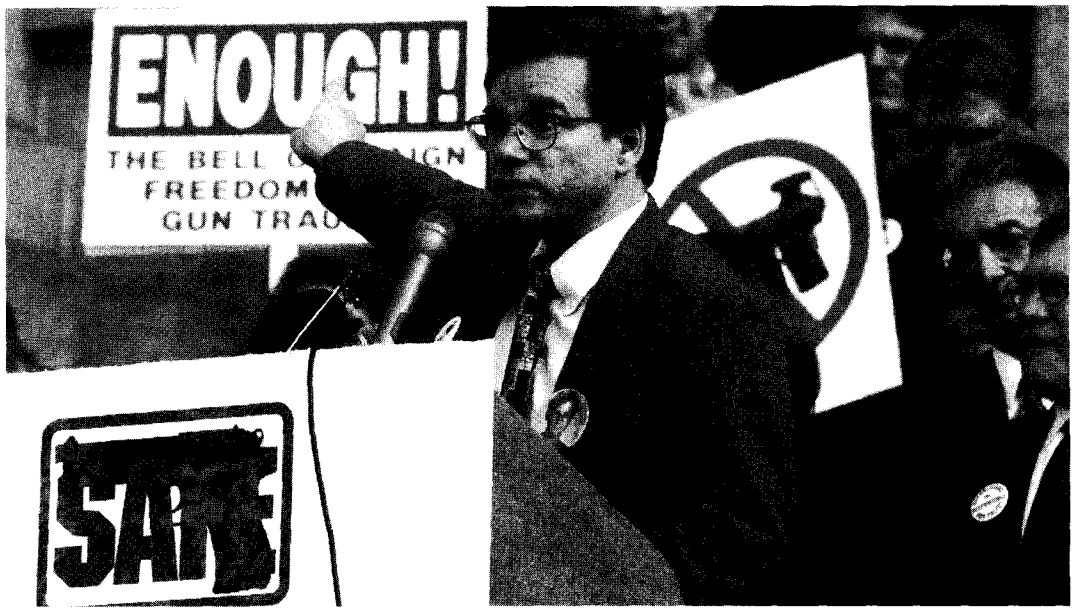
GUN VIOLENCE TOOK HIS SON.



But not his resolve.

On that terrible day last April, at Columbine High School, Tom Mauser's son was shot to death, along with eleven other students and one teacher, in one of America's worst school massacres.

Ironically, just days before the tragedy, young Daniel Mauser had asked his father if he knew about the gun-show loopholes in the Brady Bill. It was an issue Tom had been concerned about for some time. Then, the unthinkable happened. And life as the Mauser family had known it would never again be the same.

But Tom's resolve to do something about the national epidemic of gun violence did not weaken. It only strengthened. He has now dedicated all his energies to trying to stop the proliferation of deadly weapons.

He has joined SAFE Colorado (Sane Alternatives to the Firearms Epidemic) as Director of Political Affairs. He is lobbying legislators for reasonable gun controls. He is standing up against the well-funded lobbies that are trying to block any attempts at meaningful gun controls. And he is carrying the message that his personal tragedy is an American tragedy, repeated 13 times every day when guns find their way into the wrong hands.

As Tom Mauser says, this is not just a Columbine or a Colorado issue. It is an urgent national issue. It can mean the difference between children living safely to adulthood or dying prematurely.

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Mission Statement SAFE Colorado is a bipartisan organization formed to advocate the reasonable regulation of the manufacture and distribution of handguns, semi-automatic assault weapons, ammunition and related paraphernalia, while recognizing the right of citizens to own and use firearms designed for legitimate hunting, sport and defensive purposes.

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father was interrogated seven times," he said. "After that, I had no choice but to turn to armed struggle." Along with HUM and other groups, Wani became part of a loose federation of militants known as the United Jihad Council, set up in 1990. At first, said Wani, the movement was ineffective. "But by 1996 we began to operate more effectively, sharing weapons and men." In 1997, Wani founded Tehrik. "We conduct operations against Indian outposts," he explained. "Initially we started with firecrackers and petrol bombs, but over time we started capturing armaments from the Indians and learned how to use their tactics and wear their uniforms."

Over the past year, Wani claims, Tehrik has conducted six or seven operations against Indian army bases. He also claims his group played a significant role in the Kargil incursion: "In 1998 our people went over to study the topography of the area so that we were well-prepared for the operation this May."

THE KEY QUESTION, of course, is to what extent groups like Tehrik and HUM are aided by the Pakistani government. Western diplomats in Pakistan say the militants receive weapons and operational support funneled through ISI, Pakistan's military intelligence agency. The HUM official said that his group receives only "diplomatic, moral, and political" support from Pakistan. But, whatever the case, the openness with which these groups operate makes it clear that Pakistan is certainly not standing in their way.

In no case is this more obvious than in that of Lashkar-e-Tayyaba—the largest of the Kashmiri militant groups in Pakistan, which maintains offices in Pakistan's capital, Islamabad. Upon my arrival there I was greeted by Lashkar's spokesman, Abdullah Muntazir, a diminutive 24-year-old whose thick beard makes him appear much older. Dressed in traditional pink Pakistani *shalwar kameez* shirt and pants and a jean jacket, Muntazir was a sort of walking embodiment of the fusion between East and West. It was Ramadan and he was fasting, but he nonetheless offered me a drink of tea. The organization's small office was packed with fax machines and computers, on one of which Muntazir had just been checking a website maintained by Chechens for whom Lashkar helps raise money. "This technology is a good thing," Muntazir explained with a wave of his hand, "but we reject the civilization of the West."

Many of Lashkar's activities are aimed at whipping up Pakistani public opinion against India. The group supports some 2,200 "preaching centers" that disseminate information about Indian atrocities in its part of Kashmir. At a three-day rally it organized last November in Lahore, hundreds of thousands of Pakistanis showed up.

But Lashkar's fight isn't just rhetorical. After joining the group at age 18, Muntazir said, he was sent to a three-week training course in Afghanistan, where he learned, among other things, to handle anti-aircraft guns. After that he went to the Pakistani side of Kashmir for three months of "graduate training" in such skills as raiding buildings and ambushing vehicles. Since then Muntazir himself has participated in only one operation—a failed attempt to mine an Indian supply trail. But his fellow Lashkar members have been more active. So far they have established four martyr squads to conduct operations inside India. In November, Muntazir claimed, one squad killed an Indian major and eleven soldiers. "We've had eleven operations since then," he says. As for the Pakistani government, said Muntazir, "they don't forbid our activities." U.S. sanctions may be the only way to get them to start. ■

Germany and the fallacy of campaign finance reform.

Kohl Train

By CHARLES LANE

CLOSE OBSERVERS OF Helmut Kohl have long discerned a Nixonian streak in the former German chancellor. Like Richard Nixon, Kohl towered over his country's postwar politics, governing longer than any German leader since Bismarck. Like Nixon, the unapologetically middlebrow Kohl was reviled by academics and the press. Yet he kept bouncing back from adversity, partly out of sheer determination to spite his pointy-headed foes ("The dogs bark, but the caravan moves on," he liked to say) and partly because of his finely tuned sense for what Germany's "silent majority" really wanted. Pragmatically willing to give liberals much of what they wanted in domestic affairs, Kohl concentrated on foreign policy: standing up to the Soviets during the cold war, pushing for European unity, seizing the chance history gave for German reunification. Indeed, until recently, you could almost have said Kohl's place in history was like Nixon's would have been without Watergate.

Until recently. Now, Kohl has his Watergate—and so does postwar German democracy. Revelations of millions of dollars in secret campaign contributions to Kohl's Christian Democratic Union (CDU) have shaken German politics to the core. Kohl, who ruled the CDU with an iron hand, personally helped collect at least $1 million for the slush funds—whose true provenance and purpose may take months to determine. One particularly explosive allegation is that some of the money was funneled to the CDU by the French government of François Mitterrand as a kind of kickback for Kohl's steering the privatization of a large former East German petroleum company to the French firm Elf-Aquitaine.

Kohl denies the charge. But, true to his Nixonian self, he refuses to say where the money did come from, much less what the people who donated it expected in return. Instead, he inexplicably clings to the oath of silence he gave the CDU's shadowy benefactors; he won't name names unless German prosecutors force him to at a trial, and maybe not even then. Thus, Germany faces the potential meltdown of the center-right party that guided the Federal Republic through much of the cold war.

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We can't yet know the full implications of all this for Germany's political system. But what about the lessons for ours? At the moment, America is embroiled in its own endless debate about campaign finance reform. For reformers, it's a given that money has so corrupted our politics that the very legitimacy of American government is in doubt. Money is blamed for a host of ills, ranging from the hammerlock of special interests on policy-making in Washington to the public apathy that drives voter participation to record lows.

But rarely is there a comparative perspective. Reformers are always saying that government intervention makes for better health care in Canada and Britain. Why don't they ask whether government intervention makes for cleaner politics in places like Germany? Perhaps because, as the Kohl scandal shows, it doesn't.

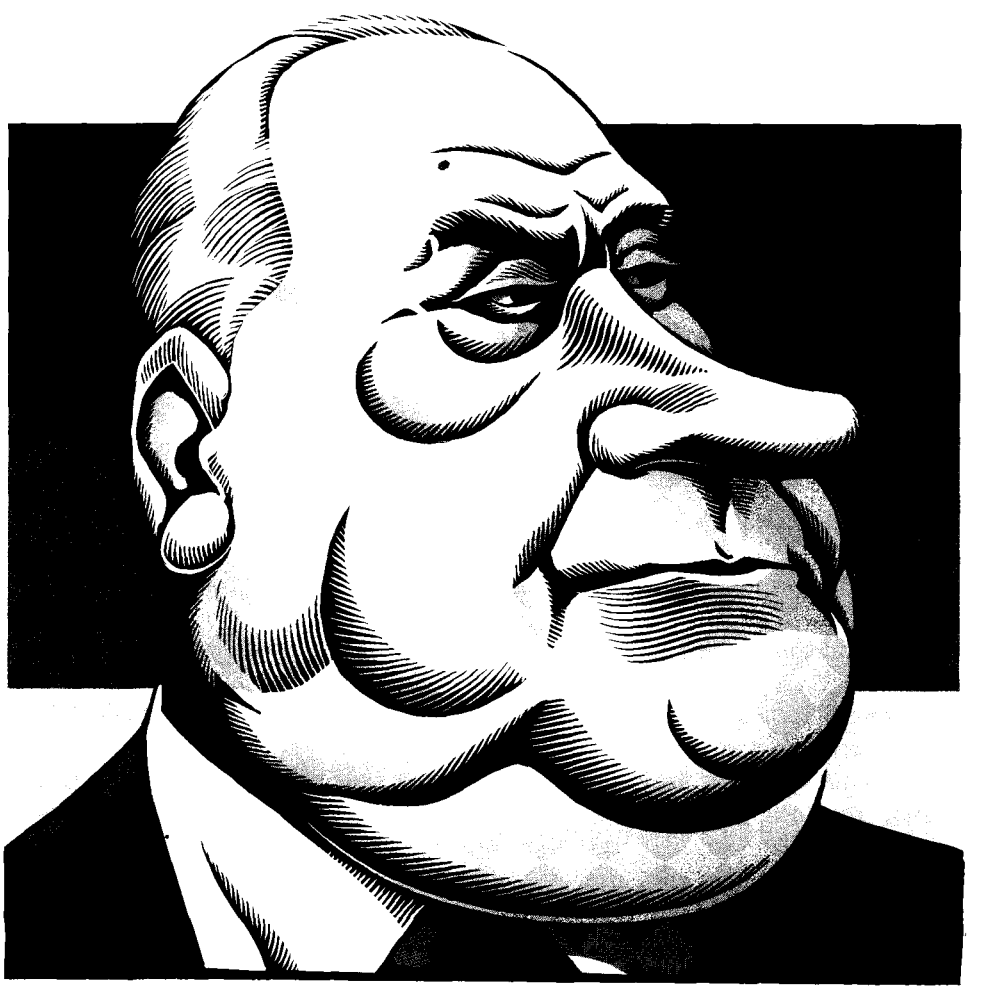
Germany's campaign finance laws are, in some respects, Common Cause's dream. Political parties receive generous public financing. Kohl's party got about $40 million in 1998; the Social Democrats (SPD), the opposition at the time, got even more, about $50 million. Even the much-loathed former East German Communist party was subsidized by the state to the tune of $7 million or so. It is *illegal* for politicians to buy ads on broadcast television or the radio, but TV networks are required to supply the parties with free airtime during campaigns. Parties can accept private donations if they fully disclose them; no anonymous donations greater than about $500 are permitted, and all donations of more than about $10,000 must include detailed information about the money's origin. German parties are required to refuse donations that are "clearly" made on behalf of undisclosed third parties or "clearly" offered in expectation of a quid pro quo.

And, sure enough, under this system Germany enjoys much higher rates of voter participation than the United States: between 75 and 80 percent in national elections. Campaigns in Germany are much briefer than here, and their tone is issue-oriented. Although American-style campaigning is starting to take hold, personalities still don't play much of a role, except in the high-minded sense of touting someone's experience, intellect, or character. Candidates rarely "go negative." Parties are well-organized; membership in a political party in Germany really means something. The parties even have youth wings.

Yet none of this prevented massive cheating by one of the country's two leading political parties. And Germany is rife with rumors, as yet unproven, of similar violations by the SPD.

Germany's experience suggests that, as reform tools, public financing and free TV time are probably overrated. Even when you massively subsidize parties (individual campaign donations are partially tax-deductible in Germany, too, though you can't deduct contributions of more than a certain amount), and even when you give them free TV and radio time, politicians still try to get more money. The only way to really stop them is to ban campaign donations outright, which not even First Amendment-free Germany tried and which seems neither likely nor desirable in the American context. Who knows what pols want the extra money for: Kohl claims, not terribly convincingly, that his slush fund was intended to shore up the party organization in the former East Germany; others speculate that it went to finance his own network of loyalists inside the CDU. But they'll want it.

Interestingly, the part of the German system with real bite turns out to be the full-disclosure provisions. This is a "bright line" rule—easy to understand, easy to enforce. You either disclose or you don't. Its rationale is clear: If you don't disclose, that creates a presumption that something's rotten in Deutschland. If all donations were secret, that presumption would be so generalized as to undermine the legitimacy of democracy itself. One reason Kohl is in so much trouble



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today is that unlike, say, the rules governing the solicitation of donations by phone from a federal building such as the White House, there's nothing murky or debatable about a rule that says, simply, take all the cash you want—just don't take it secretly.

FINALLY, THE KOHL scandal suggests that the overall structure of a political and economic system may be more important in determining the potential for campaign corruption than the campaign finance rules as such. Germany's government controls about 50 percent of the economy, through heavy taxation and a thick forest of regulations, subsidy programs, and at least partial government ownership of many key companies. This means that politicians can do an awful lot for or against German businesses (and unions). Just last November, Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder announced a huge package of loans to save a large construction company from bankruptcy and thus preserve the jobs of hundreds of unionized Social Democratic voters. The firm was already surviving largely on the basis of government contracts. In this sense, America's more laissez-faire brand of democratic capitalism is probably "cleaner" than Germany's.

And then there's the question of why Kohl stayed chancellor for 16 years in the first place. Ever since President Franklin D. Roosevelt's four-term tenure prompted the Twenty-second Amendment to the Constitution, America hasn't had to worry about the perpetual reelection of a chief executive—even a great one like FDR or, for that matter, Kohl. Perpetual incumbency can be a particular problem in a parliamentary system like Germany's, which lacks American-style separation of powers between the legislative and executive branches. For, as Kohl's downfall shows, even the best leaders can be seduced by unchecked, near-endless power. At some point, this chancellor came to believe not only that he was destined to govern Germany but also that he was above the law.

In America, many say our politics have lost legitimacy because the campaign finance system creates a generalized impression that all politicians are corrupt. That's actually a pretty good summary of what Bill Bradley and John McCain say they are running to change. And, in a recent ruling affirming the constitutionality of campaign donation limits, Justice David Souter, writing for a majority of the Supreme Court, argued that the "appearance of impropriety" is a sufficient rationale for such regulations, even if there is not necessarily any empirical evidence that politicians have granted favors in exchange for cash. "There is little reason to doubt that sometimes large campaign contributions will work actual corruption of our political system, and no reason to question the existence of a corresponding suspicion among voters," Souter said, brushing aside Justice Clarence Thomas's dissenting argument that bribery statutes should be enough to deal with any actual corruption that might occur. The German scandal suggests, however, that Thomas has a point. If politics in Germany—sober, substantive, high-turnout, free-TV-time Germany—had anything in abundance during the Kohl years, it was the *appearance* of propriety. What it didn't have was the reality. ■

Campaign Journal

Nice Try

By MICHELLE COTTLE

MANCHESTER, NEW HAMPSHIRE

AT FIRST NO ONE notices the woman's caterwauling—which is incredible, considering that in the history of the world there may never have existed a more piercing voice. But the room is overflowing with Bradley for President supporters, and it's entirely possible that everyone has suffered temporary hearing loss as a result of the Rolling Stones tune that until moments ago was playing loudly enough to loosen the fillings in my teeth. Bradley stands onstage, preaching in his laid-back manner to the several hundred well-wishers packed onto the third floor of the Stark Mill Brewery. Along one wall, the campaign has crammed what feels and smells like 2,000 members of the media, all hoping for a fresh tidbit to differentiate today's round of speeches and schmoozing from yesterday's round (and Sunday's round, and Saturday's round . . .). At a typical candidate rally, it's easy to spot the media pen: look for the mass of bored, sour-faced people who grumble rather than cheer. But, on this final afternoon before primary day, a supercharged Bradley fan has squeezed her way to the front of the media mob and is livening up the section with a hair-curling demand for action: "Call him a liar, Bill! Call him a liar!"

Poor Bradley. On the eve of the year's first primary, the candidate who wanted to stay above the political fray, who ran against the negative rat-a-tat-tat of attack politics, is being pounded—even by his own supporters—for being too nice. For months, Bradley studiously ignored Vice President Al Gore's assaults on his voting record and policy proposals. But, instead of being applauded for his refusal to mud wrestle with Gore, Bradley found himself increasingly portrayed in the press as aloof, professorial, and insultingly disdainful of the democratic process. "He's too good for us, really," mocked Maureen Dowd. In anonymous quotes, even Bradley's staff started echoing the media's harangue.

It's a twisted game journalists play, and you could excuse Bradley for being confused by the turn of events. Six months ago, his easygoing style helped make him a darling of the media. The former senator was authentic, principled, high-minded. His loyal cadre of true believers, the pundits cooed, were a refreshing departure from the machine politics of the vice president. Gore, by contrast, sweated through a long, hot summer (and fall) as the media's whipping boy. He was slapped simultaneously as too stiff and as too transparent in his efforts to appear unstiff. The internal squabbles of the Gore team were the talk of Washington, and every time the candidate made an adjustment to his message, staff, or wardrobe, he was ridiculed as a phony willing to do anything for a few lousy poll points.

Then, around the end of last year, all that changed. It was

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as if a message had gone out over the punditocracy's secret hotline: reverse targets. Soon, Bradley was "lofty," in the worst sense of the word. His lack of big-dog advisers was blamed for campaign missteps. Most damaging, his unwillingness to fire back at Gore meant he lacked the toughness called for in a president. Around this same time, the veep emerged from his "can do no right" hole. Journalists began writing loving profiles about his brainy new campaign team. The vice president was finally "hitting his stride," "finding his voice"—and all those other nifty clichés the press lavishes on those it favors.

Truth be told, Bradley is pretty much the same candidate he was last summer—well-intentioned, a bit arrogant, and aggressively uncharismatic. Similarly, while Gore has loosened up a little, he remains painfully scripted and unbearably smug on the campaign trail. He still has that robotic ... *speech* ... pattern ... that puts ... *pauses* ... and in*flec*tions ... in weird ... *places*, making him sound like the recording you get when you call 411. He still moves as though his gears haven't been oiled properly, he has a tendency toward self-serving exaggeration, and he radiates about as much warmth as a Fudgsicle.

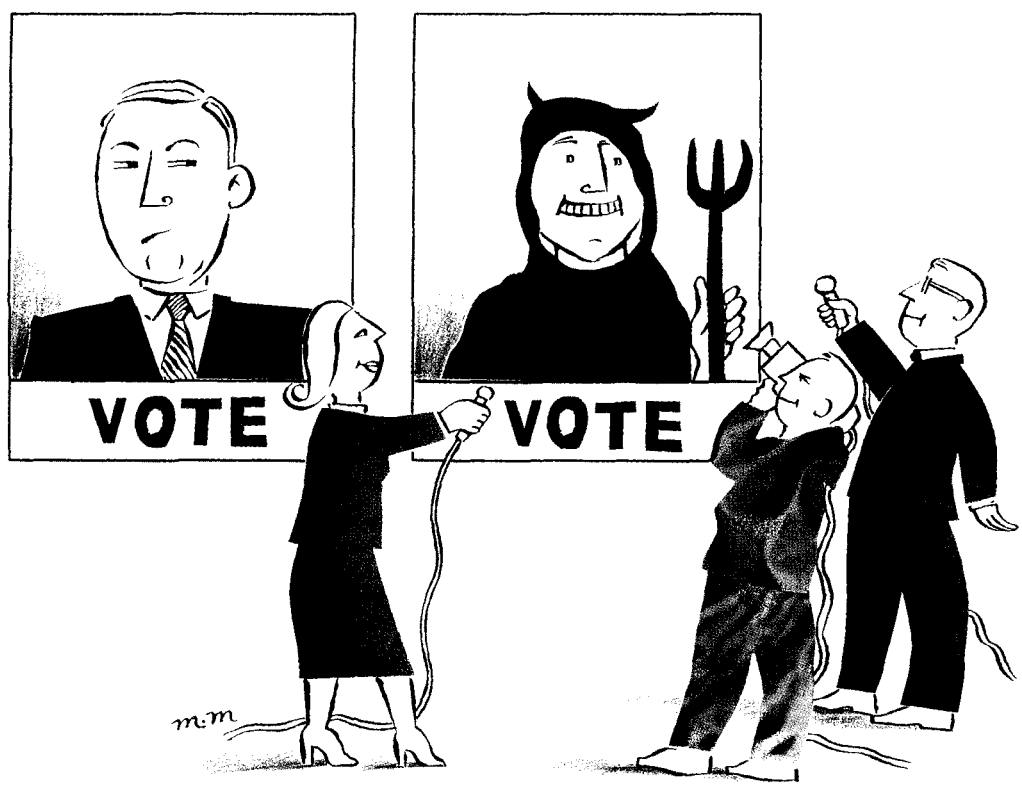
So what changed? In part, as the presidential horse race gets serious, the novelty of a Bradley candidacy, which draws much of its energy from anti-Clintonism, is fading. And, of course, what the media build up they must also slap down (especially a candidate like Bradley, who—unlike, say, McCain—isn't particularly nice to them).

But the biggest reason for the shift was Gore's decision late last year to do exactly what the press supposedly disdains: start taking chunks out of his opponent's hide.

Forget all the media yammering about the evils of negative politics. Voters may be turned off by candidates who play dirty, but nothing gets a campaign reporter going like the smell of blood on the trail. Part of it has to do with boredom: journalists can only listen for so long to a candidate blather on about "a world of possibilities guided by goodness" before they get surly. Political cat fights—like political sex scandals—make good copy. "On the one hand," says *Washington Post* political reporter Michael Powell, "we will very solemnly applaud good government and what fine, upstanding characters all of these men are. At the same time, we'll suggest that they haven't really shown themselves to be real alpha male candidates until they've shown they can sink their teeth into somebody's hindquarters." Ideally, a candidate will strike a balance between tough and bullying. But, if a choice must be made, much better to be branded a ruthless, shameless, "win at all costs" pit bull than, say, a Michael Dukakis. Thus, although still awkward, snotty, and scripted, Gore has been basking in his new image as a lean, mean scrapper ready to go mano a mano with that cocky, smirking mama's boy from Texas.

Glimmers of a similar phenomenon can be seen in the Republican scrimmage. Reporters were clearly frustrated with the Bush-McCain "we're both good men and don't take any of this stuff personally" shtick. When McCain aired a commercial saying he was the candidate best prepared to lead the nation, you could actually hear reporters begin to salivate. Like a pack of jackals, the media leapt on the ad as a sign that McCain was implying George W. was a snot-nosed kid with no leadership credentials other than his famous name. On the January 30 broadcast of "Meet the Press," Tim Russert tried everything but a rubber hose to get McCain to admit he was targeting George W. with the ad. Disregarding McCain's denials, Russert egged the senator on, spoon-feeding him insults with each question. Meanwhile, Bush's unflagging good humor and unwillingness to criticize his opponents on the stump, a trait the press once found charming, has begun to grate. Bush, the jackals now whisper, is unsure of himself, too scared to mix it up.

After Bradley's humiliating defeat in Iowa, the media stepped up its efforts to prod him into attack mode. (A one-sided fight is, ultimately, less engrossing than an all-out brawl.) With his once-solid lead in New Hampshire turned to vapor, Bradley had little choice but to spend the week before the primary frantically trying to prove himself just as capable of "politics as usual" as Gore. The senator put out a quickie commercial attacking Gore's youthful ambiva-



MATTHEW MARTIN

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lence about abortion, and he finally raised the specter of the Clinton-Gore campaign's fund-raising shenanigans of 1996. By the Sunday before the election, Bradley had focused his standard stump speech on integrity, honesty, and trustworthiness. The message was clear: The vice president is a lying, pandering, corrupt political weasel, and I am not.

MUCH OF THE media applauded (though many grumbled that the effort came too late). "Bill Bradley finally threw an elbow," cheered the *Chicago Tribune* in response to Bradley's swipe at Gore in the January 26 debate. Bradley was "a candidate transformed," sang *The New York Times*. On primary night, Bradley lost by five points, but the pundits immediately went into high gear, trumpeting the senator's victory in narrowing the gap that had opened between him and Gore post-Iowa. The key to Bradley's remarkable "resurrection," gushed Andy Hiller, the Boston political reporter famous for zinging George W. with a pop geography quiz, was the senator's much-anticipated attack on the vice president's "soft underbelly" (i.e., the honesty and integrity issues). Bob Woodward called Bradley's jab at Gore in the January 26 debate "electric," and CNN's Jeff Greenfield predicted a "fascinating" five weeks in the run-up to Super Tuesday. An offer by the senator (made just hours before the polls closed) to debate Gore once a week was trumpeted as a sign of "the new, aggressive Bradley."

But the media's desperation for a new line may have once again outpaced reality. Thus far, the senator's efforts to "throw an elbow" have actually been pretty pathetic. He ties himself in verbal knots trying not to sound negative when he really is. And, on the rare occasion that he does take off the gloves, his fury can get the better of him, as when he recently drew a far-fetched comparison between Gore and Nixon. "The problem with Bradley," says Powell, "is that there has been this reasonably subtle series of small attacks by Gore, and then, when he decides to respond, it comes out all at once and comes out as a whine instead of a stiff arm back." The senator still hasn't learned how to slip in the shiv with a smile.

For the really dirty work, Bradley mostly relies on political surrogates. In the final primary push, Senators Bob Kerrey and Paul Wellstone traveled to New Hampshire to take shots at Gore's character and vision, as did former Labor Secretary Robert Reich and Harvard University windbag Cornel West. (Alas, Wellstone's maniacal cheerleading and West's overwrought sermonizing made Bradley look all the more laconic.) On Sunday, Kerrey and Representative Jerrold Nadler of New York crashed a Gore rally to denounce the veep's attacks on Bradley and nearly wound up in a street brawl with Gore backer Senator Tom Harkin. *The Boston Globe* reported that Gore supporters started cracking fat jokes about the Weeble-shaped Nadler and jeered Kerrey as "a quitter," even as campaign staffers tried to lure the TV cameras away from the agitators.

Perhaps more significantly, Bradley's harshest attacks tend to be complaints about Gore's attacks on him, making Bradley look like the class tattletale: he wants everyone to know that Al is calling him bad names and generally being Not Nice. (The veep has, on more than one occasion, been shameless in his "interpretation" of Bradley's record.) But a whiner isn't the same as a fighter, and it will be hard for Bradley to continue his tattling without coming across as petulant. Members of the media are already revved up to report on the new Fighting Bill they helped create. But they may ultimately be setting Bradley up for another fall. While a bloodthirsty press corps dreams of the escalating attacks to come, Bradley is already expressing concern that he has gone too far and needs to return to his more "authentic" self. The media's cheering him on to be something he's not may signal the beginning of just another round of the "build 'em up, tear 'em down" that reporters and pundits find so entertaining. One can only imagine how vicious things could get in the media pen if Bradley thwarts their plans and turns out to be a wimp, after all. ■

Campaign finance reform meets the Internet.

Talk Is Cheap

By JEFFREY ROSEN

SUPPORTERS AND OPPONENTS of campaign finance reform agree on little except for this: the compromise that the Supreme Court imposed on the nation 24 years ago in *Buckley* v. *Valeo* has collapsed. In *Buckley*, the Court held that Congress could regulate political contributions—that is, the money people donate to candidates—but not political expenditures—that is, the money candidates spend on themselves. The theory was that giving money to a candidate is not really a form of expression, while spending money to win an election is. The Court also suggested that expenditures are less corrupting than contributions, because candidates can't corrupt themselves.

This logic didn't make a lot of sense in 1976, and it makes even less today. Rich corporations and donors have found a way around the contribution limits: they give huge sums directly to the parties, in so-called soft money donations that aren't subject to the restrictions upheld in *Buckley*. The parties use this money for "issue advocacy," or ads that promote a politician and attack his opponents without explicitly urging his election.

The breakdown of *Buckley* invites two possible responses: Either deregulate the campaign finance system completely (except for immediate disclosure of contributions and perhaps public subsidies to candidates who accept voluntary caps) or regulate it much more comprehensively. Last week, the Supreme Court cleared the way for more regulation when six justices announced that state limits on contributions were constitutional. The justices also signaled their willingness to uphold even more stringent regulations in the future—including not only soft money caps (the reform John McCain

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touts) but perhaps even caps on spending by wealthy candidates, whose expenditures, as Justice Stephen Breyer noted, might be considered contributions to their own campaigns.

But, despite its purported pragmatism in giving Congress and the states room to experiment, the opinion in *Nixon* v. *Shrink Missouri Government PAC* ignores a stark reality: the Internet age has made campaign finance regulation impossible. If Congress and the states ever embraced strict soft and hard money limits, rich donors would simply channel their money into other forms of political speech—such as cable television and Internet publishing—that receive the highest First Amendment protection. Now that technology has broken down the lines separating publishers, corporate donors, and independent advocacy groups, campaign spending can't be regulated in any form without trampling on the Constitution.

In his candid dissenting opinion, Justice Anthony Kennedy noted the "plain fact" that the *Buckley* compromise "set the stage for a new kind of speech"—which he called "covert speech"—"to enter the political system." Kennedy's argument that regulation forces political speech underground dovetails with a recent article by Samuel Issacharoff and Pam Karlan in the *Texas Law Review*. Money is a moving target, the article argues, and it will always evade regulation by finding the path of least resistance. If Congress clamped down on soft money, for example, the funds would flow further upstream, toward political action committees and independent-expenditure committees. This might be even worse than the status quo: unlike the national political parties—stable institutions whose survival depends on their ability to appeal to a broad constituency—ads funded by PACs are designed to appeal to the fringe. It's no coincidence that the Willie Horton ads in 1988 were paid for by an independent advocacy group that has now disappeared; similarly, a desire to avoid restrictions on campaign contributions was one reason the National Rifle Association in 1994 lavished money on single-issue ads that left the Democrats reeling.

This doesn't daunt the most zealous reformers: they would follow the money even further upstream, resorting to direct regulations on speech. The original version of the McCain-Feingold campaign-reform act proposed to limit advocacy ads 60 days before an election. But even this obvious violation of the First Amendment wouldn't keep wealth from influencing public debate. In their article, Issacharoff and Karlan ask hypothetically whether the reformers would clamp down on Martin Peretz to prevent him from writing a sympathetic Diarist about Al Gore, his friend and former student, in The New Republic. The question highlights the increasing futility of campaign finance regulation in an age of new media technologies. When Marty bought TNR, around the time *Buckley* v. *Valeo* was decided, there were only a handful of opinion magazines, and no TV stations, for a politically engaged millionaire to bid on. Twenty-five years later, the rise of the Internet and the explosion of digital and cable television and radio have created virtually unlimited possibilities for candidates and their supporters to reinvent themselves as publishers, who can't be regulated without doing violence to the First Amendment. In 1998, the Federal Election Commission had to back away from its claim that columns written by candidate Steve Forbes were an illegal corporate contribution by *Forbes* magazine to the Forbes campaign.

And so, as Walter Dellinger of the Duke University School of Law suggests, if Congress tried to prevent individuals and corporations from contributing to political parties or from taking out ads in *The New York Times*, the wealthy would start new opinion magazines on the Internet or buy radio and TV stations instead. In the Internet age, it's almost impossible to draw constitutional lines between opinion magazines, campaign newsletters e-mailed to registered voters, and the websites of the NRA, Rupert Murdoch's Fox TV network, or AOL Time Warner. As Justice Clarence Thomas noted in his powerful dissenting opinion in the *Shrink Missouri* case, *Buckley* erred by assuming that "speech by proxy" is entitled to less constitutional protection than unmediated speech: "Even in the case of a direct expenditure, there is usually some go-between that facilitates the dissemination of the spender's message—for instance an advertising agency or television station." But Thomas failed to note that if Congress regulates campaign expenditures in the age of digital spectrum and cyberspace, politically committed donors and candidates can eliminate the go-betweens and take over the means of publication.

The traditional justification for campaign finance reform has been to prohibit outright bribery or other forms of quid pro quo—that is, to prevent politicians from offering legislative favors to donors. This rationale did not, however, form the basis of the *Shrink Missouri* decision. In his opinion for the Court, Justice David Souter announced that free speech could be regulated in the interest of avoiding "corruption or the appearance of corruption." But Souter went on to emphasize that he didn't mean "corruption" in the traditional sense. "In speaking of 'improper influence' and 'opportunities for abuse,'" Souter said, the Court was recognizing "a concern not confined to bribery of public officials, but extending to the broader threat from politicians too compliant with the wishes of large contributors."

But, if corruption is defined so broadly that it occurs whenever politicians appear to be "too compliant with the wishes of large contributors," it, like the press, can't be regulated without striking at the heart of the First Amendment. In a pluralistic society, some citizens will always have more influence on elected officials than others. Some care more passionately about certain issues, some lobby more intensely, and some have social or family connections that give them access to politicians in informal settings. The Court never tells us who decides how much influence is too much.

Of course, not everyone agrees that pluralism, in which some citizens have more influence on politics than others, is the best way to conduct a democracy. Burkeans believe that constituents should have almost no influence on their representatives; radical egalitarians believe each citizen should have precisely the same influence; populists believe in gov-

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ernment by plebiscite. But, as Kathleen Sullivan has argued in the *University of California at Davis Law Review*, "selecting one vision of good government is not generally an acceptable justification for limiting speech."

In his concurring opinion, Justice Breyer suggests that the First Amendment does allow the state to prefer a communitarian vision of democracy over a more pluralistic vision. "The Constitution often permits restrictions on the speech of some in order to prevent a few from drowning out the many—in Congress, for example, where constitutionally protected debate . . . is limited to provide every Member an equal opportunity to express his or her views," he writes. But the people of the United States, unlike their representatives in Congress, are not participants in a town meeting where membership is limited and only one person can speak at a time.

In the era of talk radio and the Internet, there are almost unlimited opportunities for politically engaged citizens to receive and express competing viewpoints about politics. The notion that wealthy voices necessarily drown out poor ones is, as Daniel Ortiz of the University of Virginia has noted, untrue: anyone with a telephone and a modem can educate herself about the candidates and publish her opinions for the world to read. Some campaign finance reformers worry that most citizens won't take advantage of the new outlets for cheap speech and that lazy voters who get their political information mostly from network television may be unduly influenced by TV ads, which are paid for by the rich. But the idea that citizens can't decide for themselves how to receive information about politics and should be denied the right to watch attack ads on ABC in the hope that they will then watch "Newshour with Jim Lehrer" is paternalistic in the extreme.

Defining inequalities of political influence as "corruption" has one final perverse effect. Eliminating political inequality in a free society is so utopian a goal that a rational court might conclude that, since those who seek more political influence will always evade the regulations, all campaign finance restrictions are irrational. Last October, for precisely this reason, a federal judge in Philadelphia concluded it wasn't frivolous to argue that the long-standing ban on direct corporate contributions to candidates might be unconstitutional. "[T]he ostensible purposes of a ban on corporate contributions to candidates for federal elective office—eliminating the corruption and appearance of corruption resulting from corporate contributions to individual candidates," the judge noted, "is completely undermined by the allowing of 'soft money' contributions by corporations," which raise a similar appearance of corruption. Because political inequality is endemic in a democracy, the judge concluded, no regulation might be more rational than ineffective regulation.

In the *Shrink Missouri* case, Justices Breyer and Kennedy encouraged Congress and the states to rationally regulate campaign finance consistent with the First Amendment. But the 24 years since *Buckley* have made clear that this admirable goal can't be achieved and that second-best solutions in campaign finance reform are often worse than doing nothing at all. This is hardly cause for celebration. It is, however, a reason to overturn *Buckley* and to abandon the futile quest for mandatory spending restrictions once and for all. ■

The rise and fall of a basketball legend.

Shooting Star

By David Grann

Ashleigh Hunter told me this story first. He told it in one mad headlong rush. And I'll try to tell it, as best I can, the way Hunter did. Because, unlike all the others, Hunter was there from the start, when Leon Smith was still just a ward of the state, an orphan. He was there when Smith dunked the ball so hard the lights in the gym flickered, and when the street agents showed up in their crocodile shoes, offering the Big Fella anything he wanted. He was there when the NBA drafted Smith right out of high school, making him a millionaire at 18. And, most importantly, Hunter was there the night it all came crashing down, when the Legend showed up at his door, blood dripping from his arms like from a goddamn faucet, screaming, "LET'S GO, ASH. I GOTTA GO. I GOTTA GO."

The story—at least as Hunter told it and as I could piece it together from interviews and old newspaper clips—started in the spring of 1994. Michael Jordan had just left the NBA to play minor-league baseball, and everyone in Chicago was talking about whether he'd lost his mind after his father was shot and whether the Bulls would ever win again without him. But, at least in school, people were also talking about Hunter, because he was two years older than Smith and because he was still the one who turned heads as he walked down the corridor, his chin cocked to one side and his hands balled in two tight fists as if he were ready to pop someone, which he occasionally did. Only a sophomore, he already started at quarterback for South Shore High, one of the best football schools in the city, and, in the same grueling year, came off the bench on the varsity basketball team.

Hunter had never met Leon Smith, never even seen him, until that day they held the eighth-grade championship at South Shore High. If you're not from Chicago, it's hard to imagine how big the city tournaments really are. But there even the eighth-grade tournament is treated like the NCAA finals. High school coaches travel from all over the state just

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Strong stuff

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to evaluate twelve-year-olds. One coach offered an eighth grader's father a full-time job in exchange for his son's services; another gave students fake addresses so they'd be eligible to play in his district. "My ability to lure eleven- and twelve-year-old kids has a major part to do with my success as an adult," Steve Pappas, from Gordon Tech, told the *Chicago Tribune*. "If I don't do it, I'm gonna get crushed."

But for Hunter, who was already in high school, it was still only an eighth-grade game, and he stood in the back, ready to split, when he suddenly saw him, this big goofy guy with shorts that were too short. At six foot five, he towered over the other twelve-year-olds, swatting away their shots, one after the other. And that's when the legend of Leon Smith began.

A few days later, with the game still fresh in his mind, Hunter left his home and went next door to Sullivan House, a place for abandoned teenagers on the South Side, where he often hung out after school, playing pool in the basement. As he approached the front door, he heard the sound of someone dribbling and walked around the building, down a narrow driveway that opened onto a small court with a single bent rim. There was Smith, his shirt off. Rows of muscles climbed his stomach like a ladder.

Hunter stared at him. "What's up?" he said.

Smith didn't say much, and Hunter didn't know whether he was mean or aggressive or just cold. "Didn't you play in the championship game?" Hunter said, trying again.

This time Smith said in his deep voice, "I played," and within a few minutes they started shooting—and that was all they did that summer, play ball.

SLOWLY, UNEASILY, SMITH told Hunter bits and pieces of his story: how his father abandoned him and his seven siblings when Smith could barely walk; how, after his father was gone, his mother used to vanish for long periods, doing what, no one knew; how he'd wander the streets, searching for food and sleeping on park benches; how, when the police brought him to the station one day, he thought it was so nice he didn't want to leave; and how the Department of Children and Family Services finally put the brothers in one home and the sisters in another, so that from the age of five all Leon Smith had was his younger brother, Jerry.

They lived in Lydia Home, an old orphanage on the North Side. Norwegian missionaries had founded it at the turn of the century, and it had a gym on the second floor, where Leon shot free throws for hours. There were 40 other kids, and he and Jerry shared a tiny room with a bunk bed. On the wall it said in big, bold letters: TRUST IN THE LORD WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND HE WILL DIRECT YOUR PATH. The place was run by a Caucasian woman named Doris Bauer who gave them used coats and ties for church on Sundays and often spoke about Jesus Christ.

Once, when Smith and his brother were playing outside, a strange woman showed up and started watching them. "Who's that?" Jerry asked.

"I don't know," Smith said.

The woman stepped closer. "Don't you know me, boy? I'm your mama."

They ran up and hugged her, even though they hadn't seen her for four years, maybe more. Then they went back to playing, and when they looked up again she had vanished.

Several years later she tried to get them both back, saying her demons were gone. But Smith and his brother told the judge they had already found a stable home and a mother of sorts in Mrs. Bauer. The judge agreed. But, not long after that, Smith turned 13, which made him too old for Lydia Home. And so Mrs. Bauer, one of the only people he ever trusted, said she had no choice but to kick him out. Smith pretended he didn't care. "I want to go," he kept saying. But he kept running away from his new orphanage to Lydia Home, where he would sneak into Jerry's room, and the state shuttled him from one shelter to the next until he finally ended up at Sullivan House.

SMITH USUALLY KEPT these stories to himself. He was the quietest big man you ever saw. After all those years of being kicked around in the system, said Bill Green, the head of Sullivan House, Smith couldn't trust anyone. But for some reason he took to Hunter, maybe because he was an athlete or maybe because he didn't ask too many questions. Every day they'd go to the 63rd Street Beach Park and make up scenarios, pretending they were in the NBA finals. "I could get him so pumped up," Hunter remembers. "I'd say, 'We're in front of the crowd at the United Center. Everyone's watching on TV. There's only five seconds left on the clock . . . four . . . three. . . .' "

High school talent scouts started coming from all over to watch Smith. They sat on the hoods of their cars and studied his arms and legs, then his facial hair, to see if he was still growing, and they looked, unsuccessfully, for his parents, hoping to see the logical endpoint of his gene pool. He could have gone to any school in the city but eventually chose Mt. Carmel High School, because it was known for getting its students into the best universities, places like Illinois and DePaul. But after a few weeks Smith emptied his locker and never came back. He transferred to Martin Luther King High School, where Coach Sonny Cox ruled over the public high school basketball leagues the way the Daleys ruled over the city.

Since taking over at King in the early '80s, the former lead saxophonist of Sonny Cox and the Three Souls had reached the Elite Eight five times and won three state championships. But he was constantly accused of corruption. Other coaches claimed, among other things, that he drove from court to court in his Mercedes and mink coat, recruiting their best players with sneakers from Nike. It got so bad that at one point several coaches boycotted games against King. "If they don't want to coach," Cox said at the time, "they should retire."

So when Smith withdrew from Carmel, everyone assumed Cox was behind it. Carmel's coach immediately filed a complaint with the Illinois High School Association, saying Cox had illegally poached his franchise player. Smith and Cox denied any wrongdoing, and in the end nothing happened. But Ormon O'Quinn, a former King assistant known as Coach Q, says he got a call from "a friend" who told him, "Meet me at McDonald's and I'll have the kid there." Q maintains he didn't technically "recruit" Smith, but he

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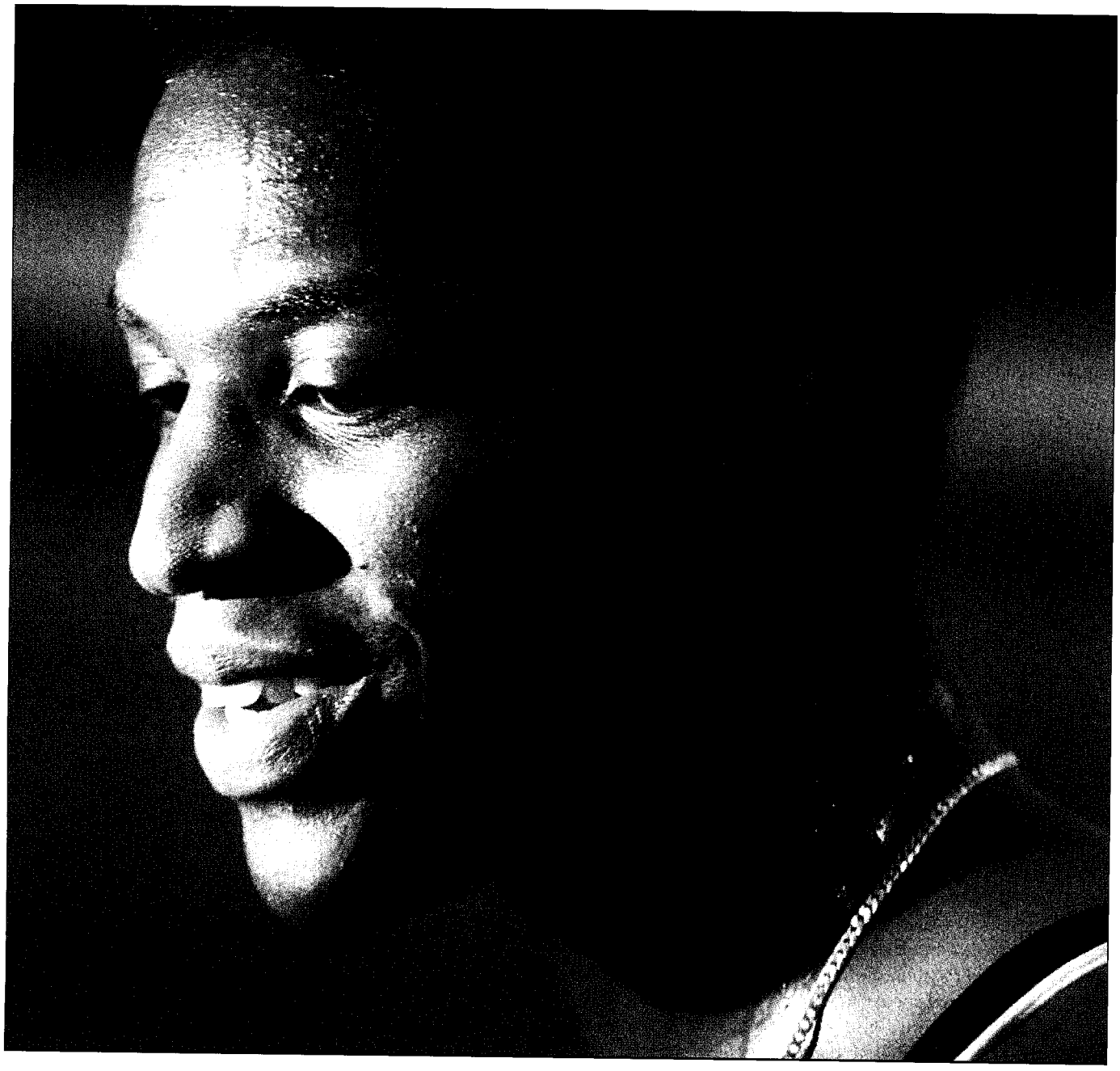

ROBERT A. DAVIS/AP

adds proudly, "Everyone knows I'm the one who brought Leon to King."

Until then, Smith had played mostly pickup games at the Y, where the kids were so much smaller that he didn't have to work. But at King he was up against much tougher players. During practice, Cox was always screaming at him to do this or that, always pushing him to exert more energy. Finally, after only two or three weeks at King, Smith told Mr. Green he wanted to transfer to another school. But Mr. Green said he had already left one school and had to finish the year. And so Smith stayed, mostly as a role player, rebounding and blocking shots.

He had grown so much that past summer that he could drive a car from the backseat. Yet the bigger he got, the more withdrawn he became. Sometimes when Mrs. Bauer came by Sullivan House to take him to visit Jerry he would wait outside, afraid the other kids might judge him, a black kid riding with a white woman. He was so scared of his classmates, many of whom teased him because of his size, that he refused to eat in the cafeteria and mostly stayed in the coaches' offices, talking to Coach Q, who would tell Smith things like, "You don't have to worry. God only made six-ten and seven-footers on Sundays and then only on special occasions." Then one day he told Smith, "You're gonna be the first kid ever to go straight from King to the pros." Smith looked at him like he was crazy. But afterward Smith told Hunter he'd only play with an official NBA ball—a 100 percent leather one inscribed with the commissioner's name—because he had to get used to it.

By Smith's sophomore year you could see why so many coaches had wanted him so badly. During one game against Thornton, he shut down the majestic Melvin Ely, scoring 15 points and pulling down more than 10 rebounds. Afterward he told Hunter that Ely was passing the torch to him just as Kevin Garnett, Farragut's legendary center, had passed the torch to Ely. "That's how it is in the public leagues of Chicago,"

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he said, "the big man's always got to pass the torch on down." Soon he started eating with his fellow players in the cafeteria and looking reporters in the eye, answering their questions, "Yes, sir. No, sir." He wrote rap songs, which he sang with the other guys. By his junior year he was totally free on the court, totally uninhibited. He started telling the other guys to throw him the ball. "Give it to me when I'm in the post," he'd say. "Don't ignore me. I'm down here getting rebounds and busting my butt. So give me the rock. GIVE ME THE ROCK." And, when they did, they almost always won.

Girls who had once chased after Hunter now surrounded Smith. When he walked into the gym in his black-and-gold uniform, ball tucked under his elbow, kids asked for his autograph. That summer, he attended the Adidas ABCD summer camp in New Jersey, where college and NBA scouts go to study the nation's best high school players. And he dominated them all. They voted him camp MVP and hailed him, according to one scout, as the number-one player in the country. "That was his true coming-out party," says Hunter, "his national debut." When Smith returned to Chicago he told reporters, "I never had a feeling like that in my life."

AND THAT'S WHEN everyone started coming out of the woodwork, people Hunter had never seen before, street agents claiming they represented Michael Jordan, aunts and uncles who said they knew Smith from his days in the projects. At the first game of Smith's senior year his mother showed up in the stands. "I think she was wasted," says Coach Q. Leon even heard from his father. "Right when my brother started doing good in ball, that's when my dad called," says Jerry. "He knew where we were before this happened, but he never came. I knew what this was all about. And, to top this off, when he first tried to reach us, he didn't call me. He remembered one brother and forgot the other."

With each day, Smith's entourage grew. By then Hunter was out of high school. He hadn't qualified for a Division One school and had spent a year at Fergus Falls Community College before dropping out for financial reasons. "I went to work at Athlete's Foot just to make ends meet," he says. The pro scouts no longer studied him, and the papers never wrote him up. But it didn't matter. One street agent chauffeured him around because Smith wanted him at all the games. "They'd always come and get me at my house in different kinds of cars, Lexus or Mercedes," Hunter recalls. "And we'd go to the games and we wouldn't need to pay to get in. Just sit there. Then afterwards Leon and we would all get together, and there was always this big congratulation thing. It was like Leon was their product or whatever, and 'This is my boy, you see how good my boy did tonight,' even though they hadn't been around long enough to be saying this kind of stuff." People at school noticed changes in Smith. "Suddenly," says Q, "Leon had a little more money in his pockets, a little more jewelry around his neck."

Then, one night just after his eighteenth birthday, Smith disappeared. Mr. Green reported him missing to the police, and his name went out on the radio. One of his sisters showed up at King, frantically asking if anyone had seen him. But no one had, not even Hunter. "Right now, Leon doesn't know who to turn to," Cox told reporters. "He is listening to a lot of bad advice.... This kid doesn't have any parents or relatives that he can talk to. That's why he can be befriended by anybody who shows him any kind of attention."

It turned out that the man who had long poached other players had lost one of his own. Smith sent word that he planned to move to California to play for Compton High School, even though, as a ward of the state, he didn't have the legal authority to make such a move. He said that a Compton volunteer assistant coach whom he had met during a summer tournament in Las Vegas had promised to help him pass his college boards and get into a top program. But when Smith got to California he discovered that most of the school's best players had flunked off the team. At one point Smith called the *Chicago Sun-Times* and said: "Right now, I am really confused about this situation. I don't know whom to trust. I am trying to relax and keep from getting stressed out, but it's hard. I've been living in a group home for fifteen years. Now, everybody is concerned about Leon Smith. Where were all these people fifteen years ago when my family was split up?"

After his mother went to the newspapers and begged him to come back and his father, according to Jerry, tried to call him on his cell phone, Smith returned to Chicago. His fans greeted him outside the gym, and he didn't disappoint. From then on, he averaged 25.5 points, 14.5 rebounds, and eight blocks a game. The *Chicago Sun-Times* named him high school player of the year. College coaches trekked up the three flights of stairs at Sullivan House to meet with him and Mr. Green. They always carried a big clipboard and a diagram of a basketball court with four players on it. They'd point to it and say, "This is our team here, and we can insert you right here, and we'll be playing for the national championship."

YOU NEVER KNEW who was conning you. Sometimes they wore disguises, and sometimes they didn't move in directly but through the back door. A scout from one of the best universities eased up to Hunter in the stands and said, "Has Leon made up his mind yet?" Then he tried to recruit him, just to get to Smith. "They were telling me they'd even suit me up and put me on the bench," Hunter says. Even those in the inner circle were suspect. Cox had, after all, been accused of taking as much as $15,000 to steer his star players toward certain colleges. Q all of a sudden told Smith he wanted to adopt him. Even Smith's legal guardian at the Department of Children and Family Services started recommending an agent.

As the pressures mounted, Smith moved out of Sullivan House and sought refuge with a friend named Steve Brown, a member of his entourage who seemed to be one of the only people who didn't want anything from him. Instead, Brown gave Smith whatever *he* wanted: money, car rides, food, all without strings. But then, late one night, Smith turned up on Hunter's doorstep with his bags. Brown, it turned out, was just another street agent paid to steer Smith to a Houston-based agency. "He was trying to mix his business with being a father figure," Smith later said, "and you can't mix business with family."

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Meanwhile, time was running out for Smith to take his college exams. "I think he was afraid he might fail and the papers would be all over it," says Mr. Green. Plus, most people were telling him not to waste his time on a stupid exam; he was ready for the NBA, they said, ready to be the next Kevin Garnett.

In the world of high school basketball, everyone knows the story of Kevin Garnett. He grew up in South Carolina, but in 1994, at the start of his senior year, he transferred across the country just to play in Chicago's public leagues, where he terrified opponents with his wingspan and leaping ability. Though nearly seven feet, he ran up and down the court like a little man. That year he averaged 26 points and 18 rebounds and won the city championship. Then, at 18, he did something almost unheard of: he turned pro.

Only four other players in the history of the game had gone straight from high school to the NBA, and no one had done it since 1975, when Bill Willoughby and Darryl Dawkins began their disappointing careers. NBA officials said such a move would destroy Garnett's childhood and stunt his game. But, on the day of the draft, they all scrambled to get him. He was the fifth pick overall and became a multimillionaire overnight. Once Garnett had broken the taboo, every high school star wanted to follow. In 1996, a year after Garnett's leap, two more high schoolers jumped to the pros, then a year later another and a year after that three more. By Smith's senior year, dozens of players were considering skipping college. "The advice I gave him personally," says Hunter, "was like, 'Man, if you're sure you can get drafted and can play, then do it,' because he always wanted to put his family back together, his sisters and brothers, and this was a way he was sure he could do it and do it right away and live comfortably." Smith didn't tell anyone what he was going to do. Then, only three weeks before the deadline to enter the draft, he announced to the world: "I just want to play professional basketball."

NBA coaches were stunned. Though one of the best high school players in the country, Smith was considered by NBA standards to be extremely undeveloped, a raw talent who needed at least a few years in college to develop not only physically but emotionally. After interviewing him, Jerry West, the famed Lakers general manager, ruled him out as a first-round pick because he was too immature. And unlike Garnett, who lived with a local family during his first year in the pros, Smith had little structure in his life. He balked at authority and, according to Mr. Green, tuned you out if you tried to counsel him. "I will say he's getting some bad advice," Marty Blake, the NBA's director of scouting, warned. "Why is he doing this?"

On the day of the draft, Smith watched it on television at a friend's house on the West Side. He stood in the corner, wearing his basketball jersey and trying not to explode. Each time another team made its selection, everyone would press forward, then let out a sigh. With the fifth pick of the first round, the Indiana Pacers chose Jonathan Bender, another 18-year-old high schooler; but by the seventeenth pick no one had called Smith's name, not even the Atlanta Hawks, who had phoned Mr. Green a few days earlier and said they were interested. Finally, as the first round neared its end, Smith slipped out the door. He borrowed somebody's used Cadillac and just started driving, cruising around the West Side. Then he headed over to Sullivan House, and, as he came up the road, he could see something moving in the distance, a mass of cars and people rushing into the street, screaming and honking their horns, and, in the middle of it all, Hunter standing there beaming. With the last pick of the first round, the San Antonio Spurs had selected Smith and then, in a prearranged deal, traded him to the Dallas Mavericks, where the mad scientist Don Nelson had gambled his entire draft on the six-foot-eleven, 240-pound power forward.

Nelson is one of the most unconventional coaches in the league—after Smith he drafted a seven-foot Chinese soldier who has yet to be released from the army. Nelson was so worried that someone else might take Smith—"a sleeper-type player" in what his staff called "the worst draft in ten years"—that he never interviewed him or Mr. Green, never even watched him play in person, for fear it would leak. "I took a gamble," he later acknowledged. "I rolled the bones. I tried to get a good young player early and see if he could develop." Smith was jubilant. "I'm doing this for everybody," he told reporters. "This is for all of us, for everybody. It's not just for me. It's for every person who's in a group home, every person who's being raised in a one-parent home. This is Leon Smith. I came from here. I'm not going to stop now. So I can say, 'Yes, this is how I want my life to be. This is the way I am now. *Here I am, world.*'"

Smith signed a three-year guaranteed contract worth $1.45 million, almost nothing by NBA standards but more than anyone at Sullivan had ever seen. At the same time he started dating Cappie Pondexter, one of the top female high school point guards in the country. She played for Marshall, which was only a few minutes from his home, and they did everything together. They'd go to the Y and play pickup, she running point while he dominated at center. She had light-brown skin and walked with confidence. She called him "L.L.O." after a neighbor's dog that never associated with people; he later wrote her a rap—"*I met you and I found a friend*"—and called it "CP for Life." After dating her for only six weeks he tattooed her name on his arm, where the whole world could see it: CAPPIE. "He never said it out loud or anything," Hunter says. "But I think he probably did love her."

Everything seemed to be going right. Now that he was going to be an NBA star, Smith thought he'd build a family with Cappie and Jerry and his mother and all his sisters. He promised Hunter he'd get him a Mavs jacket and fly him down to all the home games. "He never said, 'You're going to move in with me and I'll buy you these cars,' but he said, 'I want you to be with me at every game' . . . because he never had any family," Hunter said. It seemed as if Smith had absorbed some of Cappie's confidence. "I've come this far," he said. "I never asked for this life, but this is what I got. Maybe something good will happen to me."

But, when Smith arrived in Dallas, he was all alone. There was no welcoming party, no one to introduce him to the fans.

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Unlike other first-round draft picks, he wasn't even seen as a full member of the team. Without telling him, the Mavs and his agent had hammered out a plan for Smith to spend a year honing his skills in the minor leagues—the Continental Basketball Association or the International Basketball League. According to those close to him, when Smith found out, he was too embarrassed to tell his friends, who thought he was going to start like Kevin Garnett, who thought he'd have his own ads: Leon shoes and Leon shirts and Leon basketballs. On July 4, Smith met his coach for the first time and pleaded with him to let him play. Nelson agreed to at least give him a shot.

But on the first day of practice, when everyone knew he was terrified, an 18-year-old kid standing among veteran pros, the coaches jumped on him. "Run laps," one of them yelled. "Why don't you?" he shot back. It was stupid, but he couldn't help himself. "This is Leon Smith every day," he told the press afterward.

SMITH LATER APOLOGIZED and tried to make up for it. During one summer-league game, he scored ten points in twelve minutes and swatted a shot halfway across the gym. But the coaches had already concluded he wasn't ready for the NBA, not even for the lowly Mavericks. They wanted to ship him off to Greece, where they didn't even speak English. Then, when he balked, they said he had to go to the CBA for a year, which might have been OK had they explained it to him. But the Dallas coaches never understood that if you didn't talk to Smith a certain way he just withdrew, his eyes blank, his breath still. "They had him scared to death," says Mr. Green. Desperate, Smith fired his agent and rebelled. He loafed during practices; he refused to carry equipment bags. Soon the coaches started to isolate him. They wouldn't let him practice with the team. They said he had a back injury, though his back was fine. It got so bad that on his nineteenth birthday he reportedly had to buy a ticket from a scalper for the first game of the season just so he could be there, watching his teammates from the upper deck.

Meanwhile, everyone from Chicago was descending on him. Strangers called and asked for money. Once he had to rush to a currency machine to wire $1,000 to an "associate" back home. Another time, Hunter says, Smith sent him and a friend $1,000 to give Cappie to go shopping. "We were all like, 'What the hell did you do that for?' and he was like, 'Shut up, man, just shut up. I know what I'm doing.'"

The Bauers, whose kids had moved to Dallas to help Smith adjust to his new lifestyle and were furnishing his new apartment, accused the Pondexters of gold-digging; the Pondexters said the Bauers were the ones exploiting Smith for his money. "I have no interest in Leon's money," says Mrs. Bauer. Q wasn't so sure. "I think they're all using Leon," he says. "All of sudden Leon has money and they're all over him.... When you become a star, you have leeches."

Then, in the middle of it all, Cappie apparently dumped him. Dumped *Leon Smith*. No one knew why, but some said he had tried to cut off her money supply; others said she had started dating another star in the public leagues. Smith told his friends *he* had broken up with *her*. And that's when things started to fall apart. After all the rejection in his life, Mr. Green says, the only two things Smith ever wanted—the NBA and Cappie—had betrayed him too.

On November 14, Mrs. Bauer and her husband drove to Dallas to make sure Smith was OK. They brought something they thought would cheer him up: a 1997 black Ford Explorer with four-wheel drive and leather seats, which they had bought for him with his money. It was just like the one all the other players had, the one he wanted. But, when they arrived, Smith stormed out the door. When he returned, he went into the bathroom and started putting green war paint on his face.

"What are you doing?" Mrs. Bauer asked.

"Painting my face," he said.

"Why are you doing that?"

Smith just shrugged, his face by then completely covered. He demanded the keys to the new car. But Mrs. Bauer refused, saying it wasn't registered in his name yet. Then he picked up a huge chunk of concrete and smashed the car windows. Mrs. Bauer called the police and waited outside while Smith ran into the apartment. She told her son to get his stuff so they could go to a hotel.

And that's when they found Smith on the floor, passed out with a bottle of aspirin next to him. He had taken 250. The paramedics rushed to the house and tried to revive him. When Smith finally came to and saw the police and Mrs. Bauer and the paramedics, he started to flip out. He said he was an Indian fighting Christopher Columbus, or something crazy like that. Then they took him to the intensive care unit. "I didn't cry until I sat next to him," says Mrs. Bauer. "He had all these tubes sticking out of him."

But when Smith opened his eyes the next day there were no tubes in his right arm. An assistant coach for the Mavs had them taken out to protect his shooting arm. Smith went straight from the hospital to a psychiatric ward, where he was supposed to stay for several weeks. But after a day or two he checked himself out. And that's when Don Nelson told reporters that drafting Smith had been a big mistake.

NOW, SPINNING OUT of control, Smith showed up in Chicago and went to find Cappie at school. No one knows what really happened. But, according to the report Cappie filed with the police, he tried to give her $30,000 to get her to come back to him, to love him. When she refused, she claimed, he threatened her with a gun and said he'd kill her brother if she told anyone what had happened. The Pondexters got a restraining order and the police started searching for him. Mrs. Bauer called him on his cell phone and he said, "You understand, don't you?" Then the line went dead. The next day Smith turned himself in—surrendering the alleged weapon, a green water pistol wrapped in tape—and was charged with aggravated assault. But, only a few hours after he was released on bail, he went over to Cappie's house and started busting out all the windows on her mother's car with his bare hands, the glass slicing his skin, blood dripping all over him. Then he raced from the scene to the Athlete's Foot on 71st Street, where Hunter worked, screaming, "LET'S GO, ASH. I GOTTA GO. I GOTTA GO."

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Hunter threw off his work shirt and told his boss, "I gotta go."

And so they left and drove to the West Side, Ja Rule playing at full blast: "*Lord, oh Lord, can we get a break.*" And Hunter kept asking Smith, "What's wrong? What's wrong?" trying to calm him down. He turned off the music, but Smith just flipped it back on, not listening to him. "All I ever wanted was to come to the NBA," he said. "Now that I'm here there's no other steps. There's nothing to look forward to. I'm not playing. It's like I'm just trapped." Hunter told him just to wait it out, to be patient. "They want me to change my game," Smith said, "and they want me to act a certain way to represent this team."

"Just go with the flow," Hunter said. "You know what I'm saying, you know how it is once you're among those kind of people, like they say: 'When in Russia, do like the Russians.'"

But he didn't want to go with that. They pulled up on Cappie's street, right in front of her house, and Smith started ramming her mom's car with his truck, first the back end, then the front, again and again, while the music kept pounding: "*We ain't really happy here—Take a look into our eyes—And see pain without fear.*"

Hunter tried to stop him. "'You can't do this," he said. "You're going to get in all kinds of trouble. Just let's go back to my house." But Smith wouldn't stop. He found a piece of paper and scribbled something down, but Hunter couldn't see what it was. They could see lights turning on inside the house, Cappie's family coming out, yelling and calling for the police. "I can't go to jail," Smith said. "I can't let them lock me up for two or three years."

"Bull, you just say you were going crazy or something, and they'll put you through a six-week or two-month program and you'll be out and say, 'OK, Leon Smith is fine now,' even though we know you were never crazy. It was just that you got frustrated and went too far."

But, when he heard sirens in the background, Smith sped away. They stopped at a gas station and Hunter reached for the piece of paper. It said: I LEON SMITH DID CARE. Hunter was afraid to leave. He thought his friend might kill himself. "There's nothing left for me," Smith told Hunter. "I'm not going to make it in the NBA." Then he said: "I'm sorry I never got you that [Mavs] jacket."

"Don't worry about the jacket now," Hunter said. Smith reached in his pocket and handed Hunter a stack of bills and told him never to tell anyone about the money. Hunter said he wouldn't leave him alone unless he promised to call him when he got home. "OK, I promise," Smith said. Then he gave him a hug and said, "I love you," and drove off.

WHEN SMITH TURNED himself in for the second time and showed up for his arraignment after spending the night in jail, the whole world turned out. There were dozens of reporters and fans and relatives, all trying to catch a glimpse of the Legend. His mother was there, wearing white shoes and a scarf that said, in gold lettering: JESUS 2000. A man in a Nike beret and a leather jacket who said he was her spokesman announced: "I want everyone to know the kid wasn't abandoned." Outside his aunts held a press conference. But no one from the NBA or the Mavericks was there. Smith didn't even have a lawyer. "With all these people and all the millions of dollars he's made," the judge said, "I'm amazed there's no [attorney] here."

While they waited for a public defender to show up, a minister who had read about the case in the papers appeared and announced a neighborhood march in Smith's name. Then Coach Cox walked in, wearing his double-breasted suit and feathered hat. "I got to get him from here to a facility," he told the room. "I don't want him on the street. I got a place set up."

"Why aren't we involved?" Smith's mother cried. "I'm the one he should be talking to."

"You're not in control anymore," one aunt yelled at Cox. "The family is here!"

Finally, nearly an hour later, Smith was charged with violating an order of protection and with two counts of criminal damage to property. Bail was set at $15,000. Cox loaned him the money and whisked him away, while his mother and aunts and the minister joined hands in a circle and prayed.

SMITH NOW LIVES with Hunter in a small apartment in Houston, waiting for his trial and struggling to get back to the NBA. The two work out every day, Hunter throwing Smith the ball up above the rim for a dunk, just like they used to. Hunter expects that if Smith gets signed by another team, he'll include in his contract a stipend for his old friend. When I finally spoke to Smith, he told me his story his own way, in a rap he wrote not so long ago:

Lord I'm calling out for your name
Trying to understand your plan in this crazy game
Keep me tight Lord...
Keep my hands clean right along with my dirty face
These days I know there's not too much time to really waste
Especially when a hustler's on a paper chase
'Cause I'm a knight in my golden armor
Lord you know I love her
And I don't want to harm her
Trying to escape jail time and all these bids
Still a great deal of charisma in these kids
Let them know that there's plenty of ways to live
Let them know that there's plenty ways to grow
Let them know L.L.O.'s heart is always going to be in the ghetto
Let them understand here stands the man struggling through life
Trying to do the best I can
Father, you put me here
Please show me some sign
Shed some light on this life, especially mine
Confused and scared since the age of nine
You got that white chalk now draw me a white line
I'm content to shine
Please step over me
While I was locked up I was bawling all through the night
Then I heard a voice say everything would be all right
Father, please take me
Father, please take me
Take me as a whole
Then they'd ask the question
Who will save your soul? ■

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Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Conditions That Prevail

THE EXTRAORDINARY Chinese director, Zhang Yimou, was born in 1950, so he was only a high school boy when the Cultural Revolution erupted in 1966. Still, he (like others of his age) was thought to need revision. He was taken from school and in 1968 was sent to work on a farm. He spent the next ten years as a laborer on farms and in mills.

Somehow Zhang managed during those years to nurture an early interest in art and photography. In 1978 he was allowed to apply to the Beijing Film Academy and passed the entrance exam handily; but (a Chinese catch-22) he was rejected because he was five years too old—having been dragooned for the previous ten years into manual labor. For two months he protested to culture officials and finally was admitted to the academy. He graduated in 1982 and began the film career that, first as cinematographer, then as director, has won him world attention.

It is hardly a surprise, given his past, that Zhang's films have frequently dealt with rebellion against social and bureaucratic conditions, past and present. His first picture, *Red Sorghum* (1988), skewered conventions under which, in the 1920s, an eighteen-year-old girl could be betrothed to a fifty-year-old man. Among Zhang's subsequent films, *Raise the Red Lantern* (1991) presented a young woman's struggle, in the 1920s, against her consignment as a rich man's concubine; *The Story of Qiu Ju* (1992) recounted a young wife's long fight with officialdom, in Red China, to get surgery for her injured husband.

In these and other films, Zhang created leading roles for Gong Li, the lovely and talented actress who rose with him to international fame. She is not in his new film. In fact, **Not One Less** (Sony Pictures Classics), is a triple surprise. Gong Li is not in it; it has no professional actors at all; it is not a protest against conditions past or present. On the complete contrary, it is about a girl's struggle to obey the system in China today. Thus, the realistic Zhang is here a neo-realist, using non-actors, somewhat in the vein of the postwar Italians; and the insurrectionist Zhang, who had been smoldering from officialdom's grip on his early life, has—in this case, anyway—accepted the society in which he lives. He is here more concerned with individual character than with social opposition.

To a remote village in the mountains comes a substitute teacher for the little dilapidated school. She is a thirteen-year-old girl. The regular teacher, Gao, has to leave for a month, and his replacement, the only one available, is the thirteen-year-old Wei Minzhi, not much older than some of her students. Gao tells Wei that he had started the school year with forty students, but the roster is now down to twenty-eight. Most families in the area are poor and debt-ridden; many children drop out to earn what they can for their families. Gao tells Wei that, though the teaching is of course important, she must also see to it that not one more student leaves. He will give her some extra payment if she succeeds.

Wei is hardly equipped for the job but is serious and determined. Her chief lesson every day is to write a passage on the blackboard, then have the class copy it; but she also spends a lot of time keeping the students in class, hunting down truants, and so on. One morning she discovers that a ten-year-old boy, Zhang Huike, is missing; he has run away to the city to find work so that he can help his impoverished family. Wei sets out for the city to bring him back.

Her grit, in getting to the city—a bustling hive compared with the gaunt village—and then facing the problem of finding the boy there, is both impressive and comic. She has courage, certainly, but part of it stems from the fact that she is innocent. Her adventures in the city, somewhat Dickensian in travail and portraiture, wind into the heart of its life, its range of temper. The story ends neatly, with a general sense—also Dickensian—that it's best to finish things up and say "The End" fairly quickly.

The screenplay was adapted by Shi Xiangsheng from his own novel, but he had to change all the names. The name of every character in the picture is the actual name of the person in the part. Presumably Zhang used this procedure because his people were non-actors, mostly children, and he thought that real names would ease natural behavior. It worked. Zhang was not after coyness or cuteness or tears. He wanted the schoolroom to be normal, a basketful of puppies, not every one of them lovable, and he got it. With the two leading children, he has been a thaumaturge. Wei Minzhi was a middle-school student in Hebei Province, Zhang Huike a Primary School student in the same province. Zhang got them to be themselves, a term that in performance is dizzyingly complex.

Not One Less doesn't loom large in the Zhang catalogue so far, but for what it signifies in him it is a milestone, and for what it accomplishes as film it is a pleasure.

Kadosh (Kino) was directed by Amos Gitai, the Israeli director who, too, was born in 1950. Gitai's screenplay, written with Eliette Abecassis and Jacky Cukier, is, as in earlier Zhang Yimou, an attack on accepted practices. The story is set today in Mea Shearim, the Orthodox quarter of Jerusalem, and is concerned with the constraints that orthodoxy places, or can place, on personal freedom.

The structure is plain and strong. Two youngish people named Meir and Rivka have been married for ten years. They love each other. But they have no children. Meir's rabbi tells him that, as a Jew ordered to propagate in order to fulfill the future, he must divorce Rivka and marry a fertile woman. Meir demurs; the rabbi insists. A doctor, female of course, examines Rivka and finds that she is not barren; the doctor asks her to urge Meir to have a sperm count, an idea that is out of the question for him. (Rivka doesn't quite dare to tell him about her own fertility.) The divorce proceeds, despite their love.

In a contrapuntal story, Rivka's younger sister, Malka, falls in love with Yaakov, a former member of the Orthodox community who has left to become a rock singer. The rabbi cannot permit her to marry outside the community. So she is married, against her wishes, to another man. Then she has a rendezvous with Yaakov.

Both stories end in ways that do not redound to the glory of orthodoxy. It is easy to understand the rabbi's point of view. He is not arbitrarily cruel; he has his own obligations, and the point of them is not trivial. But to understand is not necessarily to agree.

Unadorned and darkly predictable as the stories are, they hold us because of

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their chill; and because Gitai is a director, not a tractarian. He has cast the picture well: Yaël Abecassis (Rivka), Yoram Hattab (Meir), Meitel Barda (Malka) are fixed movingly in their fates. Gitai shoots a good deal of the film in fairly large close-up, to concentrate on people with problems rather than on problems presented by puppets. He is greatly helped by his cinematographer, Renato Berta, the Italian who has worked with Fassbinder and Tanner and Rohmer and Resnais, among others. Berta understands the revelations possible in the human face.

The Quality Film Encouragement Fund of Israel refused to support *Kadosh* at any stage in its creation. Quality, quite obviously, was not the issue. ■

Jed Perl on Art
In the American Grain

IMAGINE A MAN who goes on a fabulous binge but remains an unembarrassed ascetic, and you will begin to have a sense of the complicated power of Walker Evans, who is perhaps the greatest of all photographers. Evans can pile the gaudy vernacular comedy and disquietingly angular drama of modern America into his small silvery images. The miracle is that his mandarin taste for epigrammatic juxtaposition and iconic elegance lives on such easy terms with the hodgepodge that is the world. How did he do it? This is the question that fuels the many books and exhibitions related to Evans that have appeared in recent years. This month the Metropolitan Museum of Art has opened not one but two Evans shows: a full-scale retrospective, the first in New York in more than a quarter of a century, and "Perfect Documents," a small exhibition that focuses on an assignment that Evans received in 1935 from the Museum of Modern Art, to photograph some 500 works contained in a pioneering show of African tribal art.

Photographers generally fall into two categories. There are those, such as Edward Weston and Harry Callahan, who seem to discipline reality, and those, such as Lewis Hine and Berenice Abbott, who give the impression of taking things as they are. Evans does something more mysterious. He suggests that an enigmatic yet thrillingly formal logic is beneath the surface of almost everything that he sees: the product-of-necessity designs of rural clapboard churches, the off-the-cuff arrangements of crowded mantlepieces, the small-town façades jammed with hand-painted signs. When he photographs people, the poses may be casual, but you feel Evans reaching for an emotional poise that is related to something as basic as the bilateral symmetry of the human body. There is a snappy, ad hoc charm to this boisterous America of his; but also a beautiful, underlying shape.

Evans's art first flourished in the 1930s, and was a response to forces both inside and outside of photography. He and the friends with whom he collaborated—they were often the same people who wrote about his work—were exhilaratingly alive to the kaleidoscopic spectacle of modern America. Already in 1927, when he was twenty-three, Evans had translated a passage from Gide's *If It Die* about a kaleidoscope, in which "the slightest movement of one of the little parts would have terrific consequences." Nine years later Evans was traveling with James Agee in Alabama—the travels that culminated in *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*—and, as he recalled, his friend was "wildly excited, and physically as energetic as a jumping, vociferating six-year-old boy." Hart Crane was another of Evans's friends: he created some of the most lyrically fragmented impressions of New York before committing suicide in 1932; the first, limited edition of *The Bridge* contained three photographs by Evans. And Lincoln Kirstein—who in his memoir *Mosaic* offered his own at-an-angle recollections of a '30s New York that Crane and Evans knew—inspired and collaborated on Evans's first adventures photographing Victorian architecture in New England, and organized a show of those photographs at the Museum of Modern Art in 1933, and wrote the essay about Evans for his first book, *American Photographs*, published by the Modern in 1938.

These men regarded America as *the* modern subject. They were alive to the possibility of a sophisticated American documentary style, in literature and in photography, a style with deep, complex roots in a nineteenth-century European culture where looking oh-so-closely had already become a symbolist experience. They were interested, all at once, in Baudelaire, Emily Dickinson, Bauhaus design, Roebling's Brooklyn Bridge, *Ulysses*, and Eakins's portraits. In 1931, Lewis Mumford—whom Kirstein had tried to interest in Evans's photographs—published *The Brown Decades*, and argued that there was an affinity between the years after the Civil War and the years after World War I, for in both instances the "very disorder" of the times could be "a challenge."

Artists and writers embraced the new European aesthetic, with its emphasis on collage techniques, as a way of making sense of a disorderly America. Crane spoke in one poem of "new thresholds, new anatomies"—a phrase that might describe any number of Evans photographs. As photography approached its one-hundredth birthday in the late 1930s—and the Civil War achievements of Mathew Brady were admired for their frankness by Evans and others—the unpredictable objectivity of this old-new medium caught fire. When Evans picked up a camera, it turned out that Flaubert and Cubism were in the very grain of America. What a tremendous time it was to be a photographer!

OR AT LEAST SO it seems now, a generation after Evans's death in 1975 at the age of seventy-one. Certainly in the last few years, as books and exhibitions about Evans have proliferated, the man's name has become a kind of art-world mantra. His work is much discussed, much thought about, not just among photographers but also among artists in general. And why not? We live in a time of numbingly dull high-culture-versus-low-culture debates, so that there can be something thrilling about looking back to a photographer who found a triumphantly styleless sense of style in the way that a Coca-Cola sign was stuck on the façade of a country store. William Carlos Williams, reviewing *American Photographs* in these pages in 1938, put it this way: "The pictures are for the most part mild, but in spite of this, though always exquisitvely clear in reasoning and in visual quality, they pack a wicked punch." More than sixty years later, many of us are still amazed that Evans can give all this mildness such a wicked punch.

What is not surprising is that there is

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this surge of interest in Evans a quarter-century after his death. It can take that long for the dust to settle, for archives and collections to be set up, for people to begin to see the man whole. Not that Evans was ever unknown: the photographs that he took as a young man, traveling the South under the auspices of the Farm Security Administration, are legendary. (And there is an extra advantage to their having been taken under public auspices: to this day anybody can obtain original prints from those negatives for a nominal fee.) Still, the ubiquity of some of Evans's images notwithstanding, the man himself, who photographed to the end of his life and produced a huge body of work, was for long stretches an obscure figure, at least so far as the museumgoing public was concerned. Evans was not averse to the pleasures of a kind of exclusive bohemian anonymity, and he did not exactly push his way into the limelight. And when he died in 1975, the vast sea change in interest in photography was only beginning.

Evans is certainly a prime beneficiary of what now seems like photography's never-ending boom. The Getty Museum in Los Angeles purchased a major collection of Evans photographs in 1984. In 1994, the Metropolitan Museum of Art acquired from the photographer's estate what is now known as the Walker Evans Archive, a vast store of the photographer's letters, manuscripts, negatives, little-known paintings and collages, and collections of postcards and found objects. In 1995 the Getty published an elaborate, beautifully produced catalogue of their still-expanding Evans holdings, which cover the entire career and include both well-known and virtually unknown work. (The author is Judith Keller, a curator at the museum.) That same year saw the publication of a solid biography by Belinda Rathbone; and the Eakins Press, long associated with the photographer, published a beautiful folio volume called *Incognito*, which contains Evans's most important statement about his work. In 1997, Jerry L. Thompson, a photographer who had been an assistant and friend to Evans at the end of his life, published a useful book called *The Last Years of Walker Evans*. In 1998 the Getty mounted a small show, "Walker Evans: New York," and published *Signs*, a picture book that celebrates Evans's interest in lettering and signage of all kinds. (It contains an essay by Andrei Codrescu that investigates Evans's links to Dadaist and other literary wordplay, and is one of the most revealing things ever written about the artist.) Also in 1998, another Evans show, called "Simple Secrets," began a national tour at the High Museum in Atlanta.

Last summer brought the publication of James R. Mellow's *Walker Evans* (Basic Books); and although this widely respected biographer died suddenly in 1997, before he could complete the book, there is little doubt that it will stand as the definitive account of Evans's career. And now there are the two shows at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The retrospective, organized by Jeff L. Rosenheim, assistant curator of photography, goes to San Francisco and Houston after closing in New York in May. The Metropolitan is also publishing three Evans books. There is the catalogue of the retrospective. And there is the catalogue for "Perfect Documents: Walker Evans and African Art, 1935," written by Virginia-Lee Webb, archivist of the museum's photograph collection. In this show, some of the photographs of African sculpture that Evans took for the Museum of Modern Art are being exhibited alongside the sculptures themselves. And there is *Unclassified: A Walker Evans Anthology*, edited by Rosenheim and Douglas Eklund, a nifty sampling from the riches contained in the Evans Archive. Surely a larger compilation of Evans's writings and letters is needed.

We are at flood tide, with still more to come. A PBS documentary, "Walker Evans/America," also airs this month. The International Center of Photography in New York has a show opening that focuses on the photographers who worked at *Fortune* magazine, with Evans prominent among them. And in March the Museum of Modern Art, where Evans had already in the 1930s had his first and second one-man shows, will present "Walker Evans & Company," an investigation of his impact down to our own day, as part of "Making Choices," the second phase of the year-long MoMA2000.

It is obvious that the Evans boom reaches way beyond the photography world. The very atmosphere of contemporary art—all those videos and installations and pop culture allusions—keeps sending us back to Evans's fascination with the quotidian and the serendipitous. Artists who haven't a fraction of his grasp of abstract structure or metaphorical complexity are drawn to Evans's fascination with cataloguing and collecting, to his sly way of expressing his sensibility even as he appears to be archiving or chronicling the sensibilities of others. If you have walked through Chelsea or SoHo in the past year or so, you will have seen reflections and refractions of a dozen Evansesque attitudes. When Douglas Gordon shows clips from Robert De Niro's "You talkin' to me?" scene in *Taxi Driver* on huge screens at the Gagosian Gallery, isn't he some kind of descendent of Evans, who was so fascinated by the faces on movie posters?

COURTESY THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART/PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS

Walker Evans, Subway Passenger, New York, 1941

Nowadays, though, the dazzling high-wire acts that Evans could make of his encounters with American culture tend to be recapitulated in a dodgier, brittler form. Evans is revered, but his warmth and his headlong pleasure in finding classical order in all the strangest places is generally way beyond his fans. His lyric documentary style can seem as dead and gone as Homeric song. What makes the case of Walker Evans so interesting is that the same notions of anonymity, of disinterestedness, of emotional opacity, of anti-art that can be the undoing of his admirers are nevertheless at the core of his art.

The magnitude of Evans's achievement is somehow related to his diffidence about interpretation, to his idea of simply presenting the thing in itself. And yet he avoided an intellectual chill. Many of Evans's most important achievements

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were to one degree or another collaborations or assignments; his imagination was fired up by the dream of objectivity that has always been mixed in with photographic art. Toward the end of his life he exhibited not only his photographs of signs, but also old signs that he had scavenged from various sites, and the result was to underscore the found-object—even the Duchampian Readymade—quality of so much of what he had already done. He seemed to be saying that the world that he regarded in a photograph had its own inviolable significance.

Evans's work, for all its delicious clarity and art-for-art's-sake aplomb, tosses off question marks. He remains an enigma, and there seems to be a gathering consensus that that is how he would have wanted it to be. A series of self-portraits that he did in the late '20s in Europe, photographing his shadow on a wall, have received a lot of attention lately. There is one reproduced on the cover of the catalogue of the "Simple Secrets" show, several appear in Mellow's biography, and more are at the Metropolitan. These fuzzy-edged silhouettes may be seen as emblematic of the man (and, indeed, of the very idea of a photographer), with his sneaky, here-but-not-here fascination.

THE MYSTERY MAN has been miraculously fortunate in his biographers, who have respected Evans's elusive qualities, telling us everything that can be told while leaving some space for the question marks that he cultivated. This man who started out in New York at the end of the 1920s had a life that was crisscrossed by the kinds of complicated friendships, affections, and love affairs that, precisely because they are so hard to define, are especially vulnerable to the sensationalist-nostalgic treatment that publishing executives nowadays believe the reading public craves. Yet Evans, whose biography was written not once but twice in the 1990s, has emerged unscathed. The man always had good karma when it came to attracting writers.

Belinda Rathbone's biography of Evans is clean-lined, lucid, and creditable. James R. Mellow's biography is much more. This work, which Mellow had only brought to the mid-1950s at the time of his death, has been greeted with understandable regret at what was left unfinished. (Hilton Kramer, a lifelong friend of Mellow who has over the years written sensitively about Evans, contributed an introduction; and an extensive chronology fills out the book.) I have heard people say that they expect that had Mellow lived, he would have given the whole book a more flowing, polished feeling. Maybe; but the book that we have is magnificent, and I think that its persuasiveness as a portrait of the artist is in fact related to a certain vagueness that Mellow allows to permeate his pages.

Mellow wisely resists the temptation to hammer the facts into a seamless narrative. The result is a captivating portrait of a shadowy artist. Early on, Mellow observes that "a certain off-handed diffidence" could be characteristic of Evans, and that temperament, which is an essential element of the photographer's brilliant watchfulness, can make it difficult to quite get at the emotional character of his two marriages and his many friendships and love affairs. You might say that Mellow's idea is to achieve strong effects through a certain cautiousness of approach—and that might be said to be Evans's approach, too.

Mellow gives the known facts, and leaves the unknown open; he weighs the evidence but refuses to present his evaluations as realities; he offers an account or interpretation of events along with possible alternative accounts. And he is skeptical. John Cheever and Walker Evans were friends in the '30s, and years later Cheever described a sexual encounter with Evans. Belinda Rathbone presents this account of Cheever's as fact. Mellow presents it, then delicately unravels it, and then leaves well enough alone. The result, here and on many pages of the book, is a narrative that has the prismatic, elusive, risky texture of life itself.

There is something a little startling about the brevity with which Mellow's book begins. In six scant pages he moves through the family geneology, Evans's parents' marriage, the birth of Walker Evans III in 1903, his father's career in advertising, his early schooling, the breakup of his parents' marriage (his father went off with another woman), a couple of years at Phillips Academy, and one year at Williams. Rathbone takes twenty-two pages to cover the same period, constructing along the way a solider picture of St. Louis (describing, for example, the opening of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in 1904), and of Kenilworth, the prosperous Chicago suburb to which the family moved in 1908. Perhaps Mellow would have lingered a bit more if he had lived to finish a complete draft of these early pages; but there is also a rough rightness to Mellow's opening, with its flash of geneological fact and shuffle of a few old family photographs.

If Mellow can give us little more of Evans's parents than a young, attractive couple on a sailboat with a group of friends in 1899—and this picture, in a family album that Evans apparently kept to the end of his life, is a winning image of turn-of-the-century youthfulness—perhaps it is the biographer's first, quick

Gertrude Himmelfarb

ONE NATION, TWO CULTURES

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salute to his subject's undying belief in a photograph's revelatory power. Mellow does slow the pace once Evans, at this point an aspiring writer, is off to France in 1926, at first traveling, or so it seems, with his mother. He had already been reading D.H. Lawrence and George Moore, while getting bad grades at every school he attended. In Paris, he went to Sylvia Beach's Shakespeare and Company, expanded his grasp of modern literature, took French classes, tried his hand at translation. He traveled in the south of France and in Italy. There are strong impressions from this period, in letters written by a New York friend, the artist Hanns Skolle.

Once Evans was back in New York, his circle began to expand, as he met Crane, Kirstein, and Ben Shahn, among others. By 1930 he had assimilated Baudelaire, Flaubert, Gide, Proust, Joyce; he was beginning to know Atget's photographs of Paris, which would be a lifelong inspiration. In 1931 he traveled with Kirstein in the Northeast, taking pictures. In 1932 he exhibited in Manhattan with Julien Levy, in whose gallery a pioneering fascination with photography past and present went hand in hand with a taste for Surrealist enigmas and Neoromantic panache. (Joseph Cornell also started out with Levy, and the parallels between him and Evans are intriguing: both of these ultrasophisticated students of popular culture had been students at Phillips Academy, admired Brady and Nadar, and were sometime friends and collaborators of Kirstein.)

In 1933 Kirstein organized Evans's first museum show, at the Modern. In the '30s, assignments took Evans to Tahiti (to produce a film for a rich tourist), and to Cuba. In 1935, he went south on a project to photograph antebellum architecture, and in New Orleans he met Jane Smith Ninas, a painter who became his first wife. Ernestine Evans, a New York literary agent, helped him get in touch with what would later become the Farm Security Administration, where he worked in the same program as Ben Shahn, Dorothea Lange, Russell Lee, Arthur Rothstein, and Marion Post Wolcott, and did most of his most famous photographs of the South. In 1936 he was in Alabama with Agee, working on the study of tenant farmers that had been commissioned (but was rejected) by *Fortune*. In 1938, the Modern mounted its second Evans show and published *American Photographs*, the album of eighty-seven plates with which, at age thirty-five, Evans defined for all time his lyric documentary style.

Exhibitions of Evans's work tend to favor the '30s by a wide margin, and the retrospective at the Metropolitan is no exception. When John Szarkowski organized a retrospective at the Modern in 1971, some three-quarters of the photographs came from the '30s; the preponderance of the gallery space in the Met show this winter is devoted to those same years. Yet Evans, who was forty in 1943, was immensely active all his life. Opinions about the huge later output remain unsettled, and a retrospective can pique the curiosity of those who think they know the work well. Rosenheim and the other curators at the Metropolitan are making a pitch for the later color work, much of it done with a Polaroid SX-70 camera.

Walker Evans, Negro Church, South Carolina, 1936

In 1973 and 1974 Evans produced some 2,600 Polaroids. Here the adamantine logic of his earlier photographs of signs and façades gains a tossed-off look that is to some degree a function of the Polaroid technology. These pictures have an enjoyable in-your-face immediacy, but Rosenheim is reaching when he compares them to Matisse's paper cutouts, and one cannot avoid the fact that Evans did not live long enough to winnow these images, to engage in the editorial process that he believed was so essential. It must also be pointed out that while Rosenheim has emphasized these late color works, he has included almost none of the black-and-white photographs of the '50s and '60s that Szarkowski included in 1971. Perhaps he was constrained by the relatively restricted dimensions of the galleries in which the retrospective has been mounted; but it is regrettable that we get so little sense of how Evans continued in the black-and-white vein of the '30s—and sometimes (here I agree with Szarkowski) at a comparable level of quality, as in *The Home Organ, Chester, Nova Scotia* (1968).

What everybody seems agreed in admiring, in the work done after *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, are the anonymous portraits that Evans took in the New York subways in the late '30s and early '40s with a camera hidden in his winter coat and a remote control in one hand. These images of subway riders in that a l o n e - b u t - t o g e t h e r dream state that public transportation can induce—they were published a quarter-century later in *Many Are Called*, another book with a text (this time posthumous) by Agee—inaugurate a darkly lyrical American mode. Robert Frank built on this vision in *The Americans*, a project that Evans supported, writing on behalf of Frank's successful Guggenheim application in 1955–1956 and praising the younger man's work several years later in a *U.S. Camera Annual*. By then Evans was well into his long involvement with *Fortune* magazine, where he was a staff photographer and editor from 1945 to 1965. He did dozens of photographic essays for

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the magazine, almost all with his own photographs and planned by him down to the smallest detail of the layouts. Among these portfolios are to be found some of Evans's early experiments with color film: he photographed fading industrial areas, blurred views from speeding trains, old office furniture, common tools.

Evans's marriage to Jane Smith Ninas unraveled in the '50s. (They were divorced in 1955 and she married the music critic Winthrop Sargeant.) Although Evans had a reputation for steering clear of other photographers, he became a strong supporter of Robert Frank, of Lee Friedlander, of Diane Arbus. He married again; he began to teach at Yale; he exhibited at the Robert Schoelkopf Gallery. In his last years he became increasingly involved in collecting, not just the postcards and the rusty signs that had been obsessions for years, but also driftwood and such detritus as the flip-tops from soda cans, some of which he made into collages.

EVANS COULD BE a ferociously dedicated worker. In the early years, when he was using a view camera on a tripod as well as a Leica, there was often plain hard labor involved in simply getting the camera into place. Yet the man always had a dandified, laid-back side, and those who knew him often found it hard to figure out where he was coming from. During their trips to photograph Victorian architecture in the early '30s, Kirstein got to a point where he found Evans a genuinely unsympathetic character—perhaps what we would call passive-aggressive. In his diary, Kirstein wrote that he was "increasingly bored with Evans. No resilience of energy." Yet the work produced suggests otherwise. Evans could be a sort of anti-team team player, and this would never be truer than several decades later, when he was a curiously effective presence at *Fortune*, following his own lights (and alienating fellow employees in the process) while apparently keeping on the right side of just enough people in positions of power.

The man was a laconic, watchful spirit. He could calmly subvert the rules that box in photographers "on assignment." He could turn just about anything that came his way to his advantage. Sent out on government money to photograph the calamities of the Depression, he did the job—and did it better than anybody else; yet all the while he was perfecting his all-American photographic version of the Baudelairean prose poem. While he was a true professional, Evans was unwilling to be constrained by the conventions of his profession. Edmund Wilson—a near contemporary of Evans's whose accounts of Depression America, collected in *The American Earthquake* (1958), at times give a magnified, Evans-like beauty to the visual details of people's lives—once explained that the trick of a career such as his own was "to write what you are interested in writing and to succeed in getting editors to pay for it." Substitute photography for writing, and this describes Evans, too. Both men used the journalistic craft as a medium through which to create work with a complexly personal artistic shape. "You have to learn," Wilson continued, "to load solid matter into notices of ephemeral happenings; you have to develop a resourcefulness at pursuing a line of thought through pieces on miscellaneous and more or less fortuitous subjects."

Evans dared to be true to an essentially journalistic element in photography. A lesser artist would probably never have taken that risk: many journalistic photographers, at least the ones who do portrait work or fashion work, imagine that they must prove their artistic worth by refusing to do anything in the tried-and-true way. Evans goes in the opposite direction. He photographs so matter-of-factly, so straightforwardly, that he can seem plodding. One of his first photographic essays, published in *Harper's Bazaar* in 1939, concerns new public housing projects. The photographs of a kitchen with modern appliances and of a little girl's bedroom (with "her prized photo of Joe Louis" on the wall) are so quietly reportorial that you expect the photo credit to indicate not an artist but a news service.

Evans was a radical, but his radicalism was grounded in a recognition of the essentially modest nature of the work that a photographer does. By the time that Evans took up photography, of course, this medium that circumvented all the craft traditions of picture-making seemed to offer a kind of functionalism that paralleled new ideals in architecture and other arts. The sleek, bare-bones look of modernist photography had become a staple of advertising, but Evans rejected what he regarded as the easy lucidity, the surface clarity, of European practitioners such as Albert Renger-Patzsch. Evans was a fundamentalist. Kirstein was getting at this when he began his 1938 essay by drawing an analogy between Evans and "the early photographic master [who had] a simple but overwhelming interest in the *object* which was set before his machine."

Evans finds an imaginative shimmer in the most ordinary objects, and then he rhymes that shimmer with an imaginative intuition of his own. "The essence is done very quietly," he explained toward the end of his life, "with the flash of the mind, and with a machine." In South Carolina in 1936, Evans took a photograph of a façade

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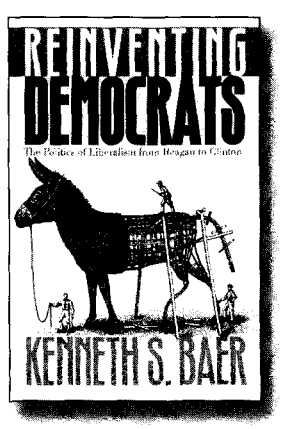

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emblazoned with signs, one of them a marvelous naïve painting of fruits and vegetables. Years later he said of this painted sign that it "struck me as very funny, absurd, naïve and unconscious—much more humor in it than in pop art. The still life of fruit is a lovely piece of primitive painting." And Evans's photograph becomes a kind of riff on the sign; he works like a jazz musician improvising on a folk tune. You can even see the name of the artist who painted those fruits and vegetables: "Bill the Sign Man, Beaufort." Evans and his machine were collaborating with this Beaufort primitive. (Beaufort was one of the Southern towns that Evans urged Robert Frank to visit on his own photographic odyssey a generation later.)

Nobody was more aware than Evans that photography was a way of magnifying appearances, of giving a new kind of attentiveness to ordinary things. When he photographed African sculpture, he approached the anonymous images with all the gravity that mid-nineteenth-century photographers brought to their earliest attempts to catch the truth of the Gothic cathedrals. Evans's attentiveness has a collaborative dimension. Bill the Sign Man was almost certainly unaware of Evans, just as the portrait subjects in the subway pictures did not know that they were being photographed. Yet Evans is such a transparent presence that his photographs can take on a surprisingly collaborative aura. He brings a white-heat disinterestedness to his work; the result is photography in a new and elusive emotional key.

EVANS'S SHADED FEELINGS are certainly evident in *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, that strange, magnificent, and flawed study of three tenant farmer families on which he collaborated with James Agee. Nothing else that Evans ever did is as instantly recognizable as the photographs of the Burroughs family and their home. By the time the book, which had begun as a magazine assignment, was published in 1941 (and sold only a few hundred copies—for a long time it was an underground classic), it had a text of over 400 pages. The photographs (31 in 1941; 62 in the 1960 edition) are treated as a freestanding unit; they precede the title page and are meant to tell their own story.

A handful of these images have become emblems of Depression America. There was a time a couple of decades ago when a few of Dorothea Lange's images, with their more overtly heroic look, were as famous as Evans's; but I think it is safe to say that his understated approach is what people are most familiar with today. There is Allie Mae Burroughs, with her thin mouth, her wary eyes, and her dark hair pulled back from her face; and her husband Floyd, regarding us through narrow eyes; and several views of their pathetically bare home. When people think of Evans's contribution to *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, they remember these photographs of the tenant farmers, but when Evans redid his portfolio in 1960, he also included some of his sweetest, wittiest photographs of country stores plastered with lots of mismatched signs. I have a hunch that Evans wanted those images for comic relief—though for the Burroughs family, who could not afford to buy anything that those signs advertised, the implications might have been very different.

WHAT IS EXTRAORDINARY about *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* is the extent to which Agee and Evans present the hopeless poverty of these families in all its grinding everydayness. The book's enduring power rests with their insistence that the world that they are chronicling is too complex to be described as anything but a collage, a scrapbook; this is a tragedy without conclusion or catharsis. Agee and Evans have no patience with the socialist romanticism of the '30s. Their merciless realism was what struck Dwight Macdonald when he wrote about the book in *politics* in 1948. He admired the fact that Agee's writing could fit into "neither the 'liberal' nor the 'conservative' category, being pessimistic, unconstructive, impractical, indignant, lyrical and always personal." "The great thing about Agee's text and Evans's photographs," Macdonald observed, "is that they dare to state the truth about these trapped people, without the usual Progressive-superficialities about 'solving problems' (All They Need is a TVA). They have given us a *Works and Days* of our times, a chronicle of decay instead of growth, where the land does not nourish those who labor on it but destroys them."

Agee's best descriptions have a close-up power. He writes that a man in "new workclothes" has "the shy and silly formal charm of a mail-order-catalogue engraving." And then, as the farmer lives in those clothes, "the whole shape, texture, color, finally substance, all are changed." Agee describes "the urgent frontage of the thighs" and the way "the whole structure of the knee and musculature of the thigh is sculptured there; each man's garment wearing the shape and beauty of his induplicable body." This salute to the brilliance of overalls, to the way that they are transformed as they are used, has distant echoes of a more conventional leftist celebration of the working man; but Agee's prose is such a complication of that viewpoint that we find ourselves ending up with an infinitely more interesting and ambiguous view of the American laborer.

And yet, as is so often the case when artists and intellectuals regard those less fortunate than themselves, the project has a voyeuristic undertow. Agee and Evans are appalled by what they see, but they are fascinated, too. You almost hear them saying to themselves, "What a wonderful subject." They are eager to present the perfect account of the tamped-down horror of these lives. I begin to suspect that they are, if not exactly enjoying, then surely lingering a little too long over these people's suffering. While Agee's writing can be beautifully straightforward for long stretches, there are too many look-at-me romantic flourishes, too much fanciful, neo-Elizabethan language. Agee exults in getting under another man's skin. Those passages about work clothes have a physical, an almost erotic current that ultimately reads as a self-portrait of Agee rather than a portrait of a Southern tenant farmer.

TRUE, EVANS MAINTAINS an extraordinary spirit of discretion, even as he focuses on the most embarrassingly threadbare clothes and broken-down bedrooms. He is a master of disinterested attentiveness. But his contributions to *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* also contain a discomfiting element of self-congratulation. Looking at Evans's photographs of the Burroughs, we are never entirely free of the suspicion that we are the better for having seen this suffering. Maybe we are. But where does that leave Allie Mae Burroughs? Evans never robs these people of their dignity. The problem is that he has taken upon himself the task of polishing their dignity.

When James Mellow writes of an "almost Vermeerlike quality of light" in the photographs of the Burroughs home, I cannot help feeling that he is falling into a trap that Evans has set. There is indeed a sense in which the photographs of the Burroughs kitchen, with the angled broom, simple stoneware, and ever-so-humble chair, recall seventeenth-century Dutch paintings (or one of the Fox Talbot photographs that were meant to echo de Hooch). But when Evans is at his greatest, he does not leave us thinking that one thing is *like* another. When we look at his most beautifully resolved photographs—of a church façade or a weathered poster—we are held precisely by the sensation that this picture is like nothing else we have ever seen.

Taken together, the photographs in *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* are by no means the most sustained demonstrations of Evans's gifts as a photographer; I

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would give that honor to *American Photographs*. But there are passages among Agee's descriptions of the tenant farmers' clothes and homes that come closer than anything ever written to explaining how Evans regards the objects that he sets before his machine. Both Agee and Evans later on reported that they had avoided constantly consulting with one another while they worked. Still, who can doubt that Agee was thinking like Evans when he wrote that "plain objects and atmospheres have a sufficient intrinsic beauty and stature" and ought to be "handled and presented on their own merits without either distortion or apology?" Agee describes vernacular architecture as having precisely the kind of formal authority that you feel in Evans's work. He speaks of a tenant farmer's house as being "put together out of the cheapest available pine lumber ... according to one of the three or four simplest, stingiest, and thus most classical plans contrivable." That shift from stinginess to classicism goes to the heart of Evans's art. Evans is a master at getting at the classicism of commonness.

HE IS ALSO a master when it comes to the classicism of kitsch. Evans is enraptured by ordinary images. Perhaps even more importantly, he is obsessed with a quotidian way of representing reality. He looks for ways of organizing compositions that have an unconscious—"found"—beauty. He loves the frontality and forthrightness of illustrations in trade catalogues, and the ultra-deep perspective of a street disappearing into infinity on a picture postcard. One of Jeff Rosenheim's more interesting discoveries in the Evans Archives is a postcard of a street in Morgan City, Louisiana, which has a composition that is almost identical to that of a view of Morgan City by Evans himself. Rosenheim wonders: "Did Evans stop in a local diner for a cup of coffee, see the postcard, and then wander the streets seeking out its location? Or did he make his photograph first and later discover that he had exactly duplicated the postcard view? The former scenario seems more likely." In the end it hardly matters, for (as Rosenheim writes) postcards in general "offered precisely the anonymous, anti-aesthetic, documentary quality he sought to achieve in his own photography."

When Evans is at his greatest, he is glorying in vernacular forms, playing them for every echo and implication that he can find. He loves to anatomize popular images and disclose their exhilaratingly sophisticated bones. All those buildings that he photographs front and center are true Readymades—found objects that in their photographic isolation achieve a Dadaist absurdity. Yet the very simplicity of those structures also suggests a natural, unfathomable classicism. These might seem contradictory accomplishments, except that in the '30s and '40s there was a gathering feeling in certain artistic circles that the extremes of Duchamp's Dadaism and Mondrian's purism might ultimately meet—which is precisely what happens in some of Evans's great, near-symmetrical photographs of rural Southern clapboard churches, with their modest porches and single steeples. These buildings have a Constructivist singularity that recalls some of Malevich's compositions; and the primitive decoration suggests a ready-made purism. Evans offers purism as a found experience. The balance of elements—the accidental, the inevitable—is thrilling. No wonder Evans said that he felt that he was "walking on a tightrope instead of the ground."

THE IMAGE OF the tightrope walker captures Evans perfectly. In his later years, he did nothing to discourage the many admirers who regarded his photographs as models of compositional perfection. Yet he was also a Dadaist trickster who was glad to play devil's advocate and suggest that art might no longer be a freestanding ideal. How else can we explain the fact that in 1971, when Yale mounted "Walker Evans: Forty Years," Evans included, among the works on display, a group of ten rusty metal signs that he had scavenged from buildings and roadside sites? (Some examples from his collection of found signs may be seen in the Metropolitan show.) I have a hunch that Evans, when he chose to hang those signs at Yale, meant to remind an audience that regarded him as an American classic that his art had a bad-boy side, too.

There is always a high-versus-low ambiguity at the center of Evans's art. In 1969, just as he was embarking on the involvement with color photography that would dominate his last years, he published an essay on photography in a volume called *Quality: Its Image in the Arts*, edited by Louis Kronenberger. Introducing the subject of color, he observed that "there are four simple words for the matter, which must be whispered: Color-photography is vulgar." (The whisper was printed in a smaller typeface.) He then observed of a photograph of a pileup of hand-painted signs in a parking lot that "in the example reproduced here, there is color in primitive accident and in bracing vibrancy combined." The curious thing about this example is that the photograph, which is described as "photographer unknown," looks like an Evans. Indeed, in the chronology at the end of Mellow's book, it is said to be "almost certainly by Evans." Which means that Evans was badmouthing the "vulgarity" of color even as he celebrated it in his own faux-anonymous work.

Here we have Evans the sneak. He not only echoed vernacular forms; he tried to pass off his echoes as the real thing. Perhaps Evans wanted to escape from the trap of a kind of probity that had been ascribed to him ever since Kirstein, at the end of the '30s, observed that his work suggested "neither a baroque nor a decorative, but a purely protestant attitude: meagre, stripped, cold, and, on occasion, humorous." Where in that description, Evans might have been asking, was there room for some unabashed outrageousness? He might have been answering Kirstein when, in the *Quality* essay, he wrote that the photographer must be "a joyous sensualist...What keeps him going is pure absorption, incurable childishness, and healthy defiance of Puritanism-Calvinism." All true. And yet Kirstein was not wrong. We suspect that Evans was the author of the color photograph for which he would not quite take responsibility because it has such a serene and severe formal logic.

EVANS WILL NOT stay put. That is the tremendous thing about him. He is there in the prehistory of Pop Art, true enough. And last summer I found myself thinking about him as I went through "Fame After Photography," at the Museum of Modern Art. Among that bewilderingly gaudy display of publicity stills, fanzines, and clips from TV celebrity programs, there was some raw material that was not unlike the stuff out of which Evans made his art. Carole Kismaric and Marvin Heiferman, the show's curators, did not know what to do with all the junk that they had hauled into the museum; but their fascination with this pop outrageousness was by no means alien to Evans. He, too, liked to survey other people's trashy dreams and fantasies. Come to think of it, he was one of the first artists to bring such themes into the Museum of Modern Art.

You cannot look at all the photographs that Evans took of bedrooms—tenant farmers' bedrooms, bohemian bedrooms, middle-class bedrooms—without considering what a shameless voyeur he was. In *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, Agee describes going through the most personal effects in those poor tenant farmers' closets and dresser drawers. In a sense, Evans did that his whole artistic life, and he did it with the whole country. There is a vulgarity about Walker Evans that is wedded—this is the strangest thing of all—to a sense of proportion as fine as any American artist has ever had. ■

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Pissarro in Old Age

I

The swallows flit in immortality,
moving yet motionless on the canvas roofs,

like signatures, memorials to his city,
swifter than strokes along a ledger's proofs

as when the V's of gulls skimmed the capped harbour
lifting their cries above Dronningens Street,

and creaking canvas sails furled in their labour
of journeys finished in the Sunday heat.

Dusk in the islands. Gusts of swallows wheeling,
over Paris and the furrows of Pontoise,

in couplets under a Tiepolo ceiling.
He enters the window frame. His gaze is yours.

Primed canvas, steaming mirror, this white page
where a drawing emerges. His portrait sighs

from a white fog. Pissarro in old age,
as we stand doubled in each other's eyes.

To endure affliction with no affection gone
seems to have been the settlement in those eyes.

whose lenses catch a glinting winter sun
on mansards and the rigid smoke of chimneys.

It is one of the mildest winters on record.
His glasses flash across the spray-burst beard,

a true timidity of disregard
from the halo of the bohemian beret.

Perhaps he wears it indoors from the cold,
the eyes are sunken, but their stare no sadder

under the arched brows than when the family strolled
the Danish stonework of Dronningens Gade;

the skeptic turned to a Sephardic sage,
rabbinical in his fragility,

since the snow's rapid strokes whitened a page
of canvas and we lost him to a city.

If the surf of apple orchards could be heard,
its murmur would come through this foaming page

where he chats with Cézanne in a flecked beard,
hat, boots and staff; his palmer's pilgrimage.

Meanwhile the palms, in their eternal summers,
rustling like children's lessons in the heat,

bring the occasional pilgrim to Saint Thomas
to find the synagogue on its small street.

The soul is indivisible as air.
Supposedly, all things become a dream,

but we, as moving trees, must root somewhere,
and there our separation shows its seam,

in our attachment to the nurturing place
of earth, a buried string, a chattering stream

or still lagoon that holds our fading face
that wrinkles from the egret's rising scream.

II

Time takes one hand and helps us up the stair,
Time draws the shades down on our clouding eyes;

they go together, painting and white hair,
a sea-rock streaming, or skeined cirrus skies,

a mottled scalp of sun-receding snow
in piebald patches on a furrowed path,

in landscapes with no tenses, views that know
that now, as always, light is all we have.

Three years into the century, his sight
has failed, he paints from an open window

overlooking the street. One starry night
the vigil candles end. Dawn is his widow.

His brushes rest. Canvas and tombstone whiten.
Mattock and chisel hyphenate his fame.

The lindens flutter. The parentheses tighten
(and enclose Paris in Pissarro's name).

Help me to crease the pleats of an emerald sleeve
Giambattista Tiepolo, Paolo Veronese

an idling wrist, the light through a cloud's sieve
Camille Pissarro, on our beaches the breezy

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Derek Walcott, "Rocks at Becune Point"

light over our bays, help me to begin
when I set out again, at sixty-nine,

for the sacred villages. Dole out, in each tin,
clear linseed and redemptive turpentine.

I shall finish in a place whose only power
is the exploding spray along its coast

its rotting asphalt and cantankerous poor
numb beyond resignation and its cost,

and I endure the gorgonising glare
and toothless bitterness of destitution,

and hard soles scraping on a half-baked square,
though in his own day he saw no solution

except escape, as sprats race undersea
from a dividing shadow. What was his sin?

Where there's no trust there is no treachery.
The nets sag from black poles against the sun.

This is my peace, my salt, exulting acre:
there is no more Exodus, this is my Zion,

Where couplets race the furrowing wind, their maker,
with those homecoming sails on the horizon.

Derek Walcott

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The Believer

By TONY JUDT

Arthur Koestler: The Homeless Mind by David Cesarani

(The Free Press, 646 pp., $30)

I.

ARTHUR KOESTLER WAS an exemplary twentieth-century intellectual. Born in Hungary in 1905—in his own words, "as the sun was setting on the Age of Reason"—he was educated in Vienna and would live variously in Berlin, Palestine, Paris, and London. Koestler joined the German Communist Party in 1931, traveled in the Soviet Union, and reported from the Spanish Civil War, where he was captured, imprisoned, and sentenced to death by Franco. Released as a result of British intervention, he wound up in France at the outbreak of World War II and was twice interned by the French. Escaping on the second occasion, he made his way to Britain and there he spent the war years and much of the rest of his life. He was the moving spirit in the establishment in 1950 of the Congress for Cultural Freedom and was perhaps the best-known anti-Communist intellectual of the postwar decade. In later years he devoted himself to a revisionist history of science, parapsychology, and a variety of more or less eccentric tastes and obsessions. In 1983, at the age of 78, he and his companion committed suicide.

Koestler came from Budapest and grew up in Vienna, in the center of Central Europe. Much about the man—his political affiliations, his cultural and intellectual curiosity and eclecticism, his ambivalent relation to his Jewish heritage, his voluntary and involuntary migrations—can be traced to his origins; indeed, they typify intellectuals from that place and time. To take just one illustrative instance: Koestler, like Manès Sperber (another Jew born in 1905 in Franz Josef's tottering realm), was obsessed with psycho-sexual explanations for individual and collective human behavior. In his autobiographies and in his later "scientific" writings, he was consumed with the quest for all-embracing explanations derived from "complexes," "repression," "denial," "neuroses," hidden "drives" and the like.

To English readers in the second half of the century all this seemed a touch excessive, and Koestler's diminished standing in recent decades owes something to our sense that he became a bit "silly." Orwell once criticized him for reducing all revolutionary creeds and objectives to "rationalizations of neurotic impulses." But to men who grew up in the supercharged intellectual ambiance of Freud's or Adler's Vienna, and who had discovered and abandoned communism before turning 35, the turn to sexology or the paranormal made a kind of sense. Indeed, the leap of faith was less dramatic than it appears.

For Marxism, too, had been a leap of faith, a device for unraveling and decoding the skein of social experience. Its "science" consisted in interpreting all external political or social data according to a grid of suspicion: things are not what they seem. They reveal their true meaning only when decoded in accordance with the knowledge of the initiated—at which point they make complete sense and everything falls into place in a universal scheme. Upon abandoning Marxism, Koestler simply sought out alternative ways with which to demystify appearances, to eliminate randomness, and to embrace deeper truths. To a Western audience, or to anyone who approached Marxism from a less holistically predisposed environment, his trajectory appeared curious; but seen from his birthplace it has a certain coherence. In the distinctive fin-de-siècle manner of his central European contemporaries, Koestler was always a "modern."

INSOFAR AS Arthur Koestler had a profession, it was journalism. Indeed, the only regular job he ever held was as a reporter for the Weimar-era daily *Berliner Zeitung am Mittag*, whose foreign editor and assistant editor-in-chief he became at the age of 26. Almost all of his interests and experiences were reproduced and transmuted into reportage, and at his best he was one of the greatest reporters of the century. His early enthusiasm for Vladimir Jabotinsky and Revisionist Zionism led him to an extended stay in Palestine in 1926–27, and he returned there for eight months in 1945. One product of these sojourns was *Promise and Fulfillment: Palestine 1917-1949*, still one of the best pieces of writing on its subject, despite its author's prejudices and because of them. *Spanish Testament* (1937) ranks with the Civil War reporting of Orwell. *The Scum of the Earth* (1941) is not just a riveting description of Koestler's experience in the French internment camps of Gurs and Le Vernet, it is also one of the most convincing and thoughtful accounts of the rotting, vengeful atmosphere in France as it entered the abyss. And Koestler's autobiographies *Arrow in the Blue* and *The Invisible Writing*—together with his classic memoir of Communist faith and disillusion in *The God that Failed* (1949)—afford an insight into the life and the opinions of a true child of the century. One day they will be required reading for every historian of our age.

The strengths of Koestler's journalism derive from the same characteristics that marred his later forays into science and philosophy. Those books—notably *Insight & Outlook*, *The Sleepwalkers*, *The Act of Creation*, *The Ghost in the Machine*, *The Case of the Midwife Toad*, and *The Roots of Coincidence*, most of them published in the 1960s—were panned by specialists for their idiosyncratic speculation, their searching for coherence and meaning in every little coincidence and detail, their abuse of analogy, and the overconfident intrusion of their author into matters of which he was comparatively ignorant.

But those same Koestlerian traits give his essays and his reportage a bite and a freshness that time has not softened. In *The Yogi and the Commissar* and *The Trail of the Dinosaur*, Koestler's engaged invective and his mordant and bitter commentaries on the illusions and the venality of his contemporaries are not just a pleasure to read. (His description of Simone de Beauvoir as "a planet shining with reflected light" has certainly stood the test of time.) They are also a sure guide to some of the opinions, the quarrels, and the beliefs that shaped the era. And they were hugely influential in shaping contemporary opinion.

II.

IN DAVID CESARANI'S words, "By the force of his arguments and his personal example, Koestler emancipated

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thousands of people from thraldom to Marx, Lenin and Stalin." For this reason alone, the author of *Darkness at Noon* (of which more later) would merit a major biography. It is a task much facilitated by the copious written record—in addition to the books already mentioned and a half-dozen novels, Koestler kept detailed diaries and conducted a sustained correspondence with his many wives, lovers, friends, and enemies. Cesarani has put all this material to very good use; the result is a lively narrative of Koestler's life, works, and opinions. Cesarani's descriptions and summaries of the published works are conventional, but then it is not easy to do justice at second hand to writings whose virtue lies in their vivacity and their immediacy. About the later writings, certainly, it would take an inordinately sympathetic biographer to avoid remarking upon the likelihood that they will soon be justly forgotten; even so, Cesarani is kind enough to suggest that some of Koestler's parascientific aperçus "may yet have the last laugh on the grey beards of Academe." It is not clear why he thinks so. If it proves true, it will only be as a result of the sort of coincidence that Koestler set out so resolutely to deny.

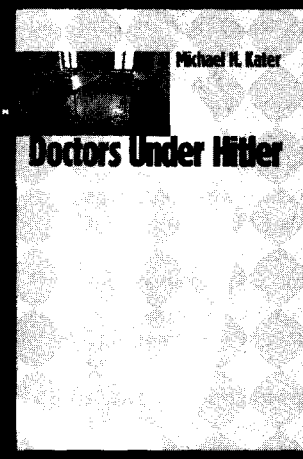
About Koestler the man, Cesarani has rather more to say, and much of it is to the point. Arthur Koestler seems to have suffered from what Cesarani, following many of Koestler's own friends, calls "a crippling deficit of self-regard." He was a smallish man, an outsider for most of his life, who wanted very much to please and to be liked, but who succeeded in arguing, breaking with, and sometimes brawling with almost everyone he met. Like Sartre, he took Benzedrine to sustain him during his spells of writing, and he drank like a fish. His drinking led to bouts of quarrelsome violence and an extraordinary series of smashed cars; and when he wasn't drinking, fighting, or writing he was often depressed and consumed with self-doubt. He was strikingly generous to strangers with the riches he earned from *Darkness at Noon* and his later writings, but he was selfish and narcissistic in his private life. According to his biographer, he was inordinately attracted to powerful men and weak women.

Of all these traits, it is Koestler's status as an outsider that seems to me the most salient and interesting. Like many Central European intellectuals of his generation, Koestler had no fixed abode. He wandered from country to country, from language to language, from one commitment to the next. He knew and socialized with all the significant writers and thinkers of his age in Berlin, Paris, Jerusalem, London, and New York, but he was never "one of them." It was perhaps a misfortune that he should have ended up in England: of all his transitory homes, this was the place where belonging came hardest for the foreigner.

Koestler's accent, his intensity, his experience, and his sense of the tragic all put him at odds with the distinctive English preference for understatement and irony. In New York, he was taken Very Seriously. In Paris, his friends quarreled with him over the Great Issues of the day. But in London, where he tried very hard to become English and strove for acceptance and membership, Koestler was sometimes an object of amusement and even ridicule. His English contemporaries admired him, certainly. They respected him and they acknowledged his influence. But on the whole they did not understand him.

David Cesarani is English—he is professor of Modern Jewish History at the University of Southampton—and it seems to me that he, too, does not always understand Arthur Koestler. He certainly finds him a bit annoying. The book frequently second-guesses Koestler's own memoirs and questions their credibility. It takes Koestler to task for his opinions and raps him over the knuckles for his shortcomings. This seems all a bit harsh. Koestler's memoirs certainly retell his life story from his own distinctive perspective (how else would they tell it?), and the story itself occasionally changes from one version to the next, in keeping with his evolving interests. Still, Koestler is actually a rather good source of information about his own weaknesses. He admits to his false toughness, his insecurities, his constant unfulfilled search for the perfect Cause and the perfect woman, and his many personal failings. He faithfully recorded and castigated his "complexes," his guilt, his dissipation, his womanizing, and his bad manners.

Cesarani acknowledges this, but then he admonishes Koestler for failing to pull his socks up and improve himself. Even when Koestler does correct a failing, Cesarani finds fault in his motives. In his Spanish jail, awaiting execution, Koestler came to the firm and abiding conviction that no abstract ideal can justify individual suffering. Cesarani disapproves: "It is perturbing and hard to accept in one who was so critical of others for their lack of imagination, that Koestler only realised that nothing, not even the most rationally compelling cause, was worth the sacrifice of a single life when it was his life that was at stake." Once released, Koestler went on to devote his energies to dismantling the myth of Dialectical Materialism. But his



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rationalist critique of Marxism-Leninism's fake science falls short of his biographer's expectations, and Cesarani rebukes him for the "heuristic gaffe" of deploying a "materialist" criticism against a materialist illusion.

A biographer is entitled to censure his subject on occasion. More serious is Cesarani's distance from Koestler's European world. There are some minor but revealing errors: Otto Katz, another displaced Central European Jew, who was executed in Prague in December 1952 as a fellow "conspirator" in the trial of Rudolf Slansky, was not the cover name of André Simone (not "Simon"); it was the other way around. The Italian essayist and onetime colleague of Koestler's was Nicola Chiaromonte, not Nicholas Chiaromonte. Ernest Gellner was decidedly not a "Viennese-born philosopher." *France-Observateur* (not *Observateur*) was not a Communist sheet, but a neutralist journal of the non-Communist Parisian Left, which gives its attacks on Koestler in 1950 a significance quite different from the one suggested by Cesarani. And if André Gide was recording opinions about Koestler in his diary "in the 1960s," then Cesarani has had access to some very privileged information: Gide died in 1951.

Minor gaffes such as these help explain deeper misunderstandings. Cesarani has a soft spot for Simone de Beauvoir and cites her more than once as a guide to Koestler's failings. Commenting on Koestler's anti-Communism in February 1948 (at the time of the Prague coup), de Beauvoir opines: "He is remorseful *not to be* any longer a Communist, because now they are going to win and he wants to be on the winning side." This tells us quite a lot about de Beauvoir, but not much about Koestler. In a similar vein we are informed approvingly that she thought Koestler had "a mediocre Marxist education." That is true—though coming from this source it is a bit ripe. But it is irrelevant. Men and women did not become Communists in interwar Europe owing to the close study of Marxist texts. In Koestler's own words (not cited by Cesarani), "What an enormous longing for a new human order there was in the era between the world wars, and what a miserable failure to live up to it."

That is why people joined the Communist Party, and it is also why they were so reluctant to abandon it. Cesarani cannot fathom why Koestler did not make a clean and early break with the Party—after all, his disillusion began with his firsthand observations of the Soviet Union just a year after he became a Communist. According to his biographer, Koestler's claims of early disillusionment should therefore be treated with suspicion—it "took a long time to have much effect." It was only (!) in 1938 that Koestler broke with the German Communists in Parisian exile, and even then he promised not to attack or "break fealty with" the Soviet Union. Cesarani finds this odd and describes it as a very "late" break with communism. But it is absolutely at one with the experience of many ex-Communists of the time. It was not easy to leave the party, with all the fellowship and the security that it offered; and 1938 was hardly a time to hand hostages to Fascist fortune by embarrassing your former comrades and discounting their illusions and their suffering. It is easy for Cesarani now to castigate Koestler and his contemporaries for not seeing the light right away and behaving accordingly. At the time, in continental Europe, matters were a little more complicated.

Arthur Koestler by Jack Coughlin for The New Republic

The distance separating Cesarani from Koestler when it comes to understanding the mood of Europe before (and after) the war is chiefly one of space: the space that separates Britain from Europe. Obviously Cesarani understands the turbulent background to intellectual and emotional choices in the first half of the century: the Central European catastrophe of 1918-1933 (revolution-inflation-dictatorship), the threat of Hitler, the promise of communism, Spain, wartime collaboration and the Soviet occupation of half the continent. But none of these calamities happened in Britain, to its eternal good fortune; and a historian of Britain may too readily underestimate their significance when accounting for attitudes and actions across the Channel.

Still, if there is a real difficulty with Cesarani's approach, it results from an unbridgeable distance not in space but in time. For in two crucial respects, Cesarani's book is deeply anachronistic. In the first place, he takes Koestler severely to task for his attitude to women. There is no doubt that the way Arthur Koestler treated women was, to say the least, disrespectful. It is not so much that he had serial affairs and wives—that might plausibly be interpreted as evidence that he rather liked women, even if he failed to like any one woman for very long. But there is a lot of evidence that Koestler did not so much seduce women as accost them and expect them to sleep with him; and when they demurred, he was pushy and demanding. Most of the women whom Koestler tried to bed were younger than him, and were often impressed by his fame. However badly he treated them, they tended, in Sidney Hook's words, to "make allowances" for him. He indulged his sexual whims with little regard for the feelings of others, and he could be as violent and reckless at home as he was in cafés or at the wheel. On at least one occasion (according to

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Cesarani) Koestler forced someone to have sex against her will.

That is quite a rap sheet. It should be sufficient to introduce a degree of shadow into any portrait of the man. Yet Cesarani goes much, much further. Koestler, he writes, had a sustained record of "beating and raping" women. In Cesarani's intemperate words, Koestler was nothing less than "a serial rapist."

IF KOESTLER WERE ALIVE, he would surely sue for libel, and he would surely win. Even on Cesarani's own evidence, there is only one unambiguously attested charge of rape: in 1952 Koestler assaulted Jill Craigie, the wife of English politician and future Labour Party leader Michael Foot, in her own home during her husband's absence. Much of the rest consists of circumstantial evidence and a strong dose of present-minded interpretation. Thus both Koestler and Simone de Beauvoir acknowledged that they had one night of bad sex, a mutual mistake. De Beauvoir attributed it to Koestler's persistence—she finally gave in under the pressure of his importuning. Is this rape? A number of other women attest that Koestler pestered them for sex—some conceded, some didn't. Whether they did or they didn't, many women seem to have remained fond of Koestler after the experience. For Cesarani, this is inexplicable: "Perhaps he attracted a certain kind of masochistic personality for whom he fulfilled a particular need?" As for those who had sex with Arthur Koestler and went back for more, they presumably had a "compulsion to re-enact that wounding process."

Maybe. Or maybe they just enjoyed themselves. Cesarani, like Koestler at his most polemical, sees everything in black or white. Either you are making consensual, mutually initiated, monogamous, nonaggressive, and amorous love, or else something very dark and unpleasant is taking place: rape—or, more commonly "date-rape," a term that occurs with disarming frequency in this book. As for the notion that someone might indeed be disposed to sexual domination, and even occasionally to force, and yet be appealing to women—well, this has apparently never occurred to Cesarani, even as a hypothesis. As a consequence, there is something tedious and "sexually correct" about his account of Koestler's adventures. Cesarani doesn't like the younger Koestler's multitude of relationships, his "relentless pursuit of women." Koestler himself explained reasonably enough that he habitually sought female companionship and comfort, but for Cesarani, "there comes a point when his rationalizations for sleeping around ring hollow."

Worse for poor Koestler, he preferred women. If he had bisexual leanings, he suppressed them: "To him, heterosexuality was the norm, men were dominant partners and women were submissive." Worse still, Koestler was not always faithful to one woman at a time: nor, indeed, were his women always faithful to him. Celia Paget briefly abandoned Koestler for a weeklong fling with Albert Camus, prompting an outburst from Cesarani, who finds it "extraordinary" that "people who constantly talked about friendship and loyalty" spent so much time in bed with their friends. Describing Koestler's occasional taste for threesomes, Cesarani writes of "another gruesome triangular encounter." The reader is constantly aware of the author's presence, hovering pruriently and commenting sniffily upon the copulations of his protagonists. "Conventional morality seems to have had little purchase in these circles." Quite.

WHY SHOULD IT? Even if we exclude as special pleading the claim (advanced by Koestler's fellow Hungarian George Mikes) that if Koestler did not take no for an answer he was only practicing the sexual mores of his birthplace, the fact remains that sleeping around, "betraying" one's lover or one's spouse, treating women as submissive, and behaving in a generally "sexist" manner was hardly a trait peculiar to Arthur Koestler. Cesarani may not be old enough to remember the world before the sexual revolutions of the 1960s, and he may lack personal experience of the conventions and the morals of the European intelligentsia. But as a historian he should surely hesitate before chastizing his subject for attitudes and assumptions that were widely shared in his cultural and social milieu. To the best of my knowledge, the overwhelming majority of the Hungarian, Austrian, Russian, German, and French intellectuals who pass through the pages of Cesarani's book shared most of Koestler's views on such matters, even if they were not always so assiduous or so successful in practice. You have only to read their memoirs. Even the English were a lot less conventionally well-behaved back then; but since their misdemeanors often involved partners of the same sex, Cesarani would probably find less to reprove.

The present-minded primness of Cesarani's tone is often unintentionally funny and self-revealing. What sounds like a rather entertaining luncheon gathering of Koestler and some women friends becomes a "grisly assembly of ex-lovers." When poor Cynthia Jeffries (Koestler's last wife) takes up German and cooking,

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she earns Cesarani's lasting disapproval for these "strikingly submissive gestures." And Cesarani wholly deplores "Koestler's assumption that a life of promiscuity and deception is normal and should be pleasurable, were it not for the inconvenience of a bad conscience." If Koestler was ever made uncomfortable by his conscience—and there is not much evidence that he was—it was surely as nothing to the discomfort that he has caused his biographer by so obviously enjoying bodily pleasures and indulging them to the full. You can almost feel Cesarani's relief when Koestler gets too old for extramarital sex and settles into respectable middle age.

Reviewers of the English edition of this book have been much taken with the issue of Koestler's sideline in rape, and have asked how far this should alter posterity's view of him. But Koestler's attitude towards women has never been in doubt—you have only to read his memoirs or some of the novels, notably *Arrival and Departure*. We now know that he raped the wife of a friend and forced his attentions on some reluctant women. This is deeply unattractive behavior. Yet Koestler was no moralist. He did not preach about human goodness or pose himself as an exemplar of anything. If it turned out that he was a closet racist, or had remained all his life a secret member of the Communist Party, or had privately financed violent terrorist organizations, then some of his publications would indeed seem very odd, and we should have to ask how far he wrote in good faith. But nothing he wrote about sex is in contradiction with his actions. And nothing he wrote about politics, or intellectuals, or the death penalty, depends for its credibility upon his sexual behavior. Koestler was a great journalist who exercised great influence; no more, no less. And neither of those claims is vulnerable to our views about his private life, after the fact.

III.

THE SECOND ANACHRONISM in Cesarani's book concerns Koestler's Jewishness. On this score it is easier to sympathize with the biographer. Arthur Koestler was a Jew, born of Jewish parents into early-twentieth-century Budapest's large and thriving Jewish community. He was drawn into Zionism while at university in Vienna: by 1924, at the age of 19, he was chairman of the Association of Jewish Nationalist Students societies in Austria. He spent much of the late 1920s in Mandate Palestine, learning a passable café Hebrew, and he would return there in 1945. In addition to *Promise and Fulfillment*, his Palestine stints resulted in *Thieves in the Night* (1946), a novel about a Jewish settlement marked by the writer's sympathy for the politics of Menachem Begin's Irgun. *Arrival and Departure*, published in 1943, was another novel shaped by Koestler's interest in the fate of the Jews, this time in occupied wartime Europe. After the declaration of the State of Israel, Koestler left the Middle East, never to return; but he remained sufficiently involved with the Jewish dilemma to write *The Thirteenth Tribe*, which appeared in 1976. It is a bizarre, misguided attempt to demonstrate that the Ashkenazi Jews of Europe are descended from Khazar tribesmen in the Caucasus—and thus need feel no special affinity for, nor obligation towards, Israel and the traditional Jewish heritage.

From all this, it would seem reasonable to infer that being Jewish was rather important to Arthur Koestler. Yet Koestler himself tended to downplay its significance. When he was not writing about Israel, Jews did not figure prominently in his work, and the autobiography goes to some lengths to understate the influence of his Jewish heritage upon his education or his opinions. Cesarani finds this a little odd, and his suspicions are probably justified, if only in part. Koestler's efforts to be what Isaac Deutscher called "a non-Jewish Jew" only serve to remind us just how very Jewish his story is, not least (for non-practicing Central Europeans of his generation) in the effort to deny that being Jewish did or should matter. Koestler was too intelligent to claim that being Jewish was an elective affinity and that he could just choose not to be: history (that is, Hitler) had deprived him of that choice. In later years, though, he certainly behaved as though he wished it were otherwise.

Cesarani is right to note all this. But in his determination to show that Koestler was in denial, he inverts Koestler's own emphasis and finds, or claims to find, a Jewish dimension in almost everything Koestler wrote or did. When Koestler joins the German Communist Party, he is seeking an alternative way to "resolve the Jewish Question." His Communist activities, his political engagements in Popular Front Paris, and his adventures in Spain only make sense to Cesarani when seen through the prism of Jewishness. How else account for Koestler's decision to leave Palestine in 1929 and engage in European politics? "A passionate involvement of seven years' duration in Jewish affairs could not be dropped instantly, even less when events thrust the fate of the Jews into prominence. On the contrary, Koestler's ideological, political and geographical peregrinations make more sense if they are seen in the light of his complex Jewish identity."

This is reductionist. It is perfectly possible to turn away from seven years of youthful involvement in a political or national movement, and to redirect one's attentions to an entirely different set of causes. Many of us have made precisely such a change. In the last, turbulent years of Weimar Germany, a switch from Jabotinsky to Stalin might seem unusual, but it was readily explicable—and Koestler was still only 26 years old when he joined the Party.

According to Cesarani, however, it just doesn't make sense: "Although he explained his dive into the Communist Party in a variety of more or less convincing ways, it appears most logical when it is seen as having a significant Jewish dimension." Does it really? And what does logic have to do with it? Political choices in that time and in that place were made out of optimism, pessimism, fear, longing, illusion, calculation. Even if it were somehow "logical" for a Jew to become a Communist, that would not explain why any one Jew in fact did so. There were many non-Jewish Communists, and even more Jewish non-Communists, in interwar Europe; the isomorphic relationship between Communism and non-Zionist, nonpracticing Jews may seem evident to Cesarani, but it was less obvious at the time.

IN A SIMILAR VEIN, Cesarani is not well pleased with Koestler's attitude to Israel after 1948. Koestler left Israel in that year and did not return; his memoirs, written shortly afterwards, do indeed play down his earlier involvement in Jewish affairs, something that Cesarani calls "repression." In later years, in keeping with his rather Manichaean intellectual style, Koestler claimed that the existence of a national state offered Jews a clear and unavoidable choice between aliyah or assimilation, between Zionism and the abandonment of a redundant tradition. His insistence on the impossibility of any middle path provoked a famous correspondence in 1952 with Isaiah Berlin, who suggested that there were many ways to be Jewish, and that a certain untidiness and incoherence in one's way of life might be preferable to the uncompromising options proposed by Koestler.

Cesarani goes further. He finds fault with Koestler's etiolated account of Jewishness ("His version of Judaism was nonsensical ... Judaism does have a national dimension, but it also has a universal message") and rather disapproves of Koestler's "un-Jewish" admiration for the civilization of Christian Europe. He censures Koestler's decision to live for a while in the Austrian Alps, and cannot fathom his envy for the village communities that he saw around him in Alpbach ("until

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quite recently those very same Tyroleans had been shooting and gassing his ilk wherever they found them"). When Koestler suggests that the existence of Israel will help Jews overcome those characteristics which were shaped by and encouraged anti-Semitism, Cesarani interprets him as "blaming the victims of Nazi persecution for their appalling fate." There is much more in this vein.

BUT CESARANI HAS missed something in his haste to hold Koestler up to contemporary standards of Jewish consciousness and find him sorely lacking. Koestler was as much an outsider in Palestine and Israel as he was everywhere else. This may have made him an unsuccessful Zionist, but it sharpened his observer's antennae. As he wrote to Celia Paget, "This country is only bearable for people who have very strong emotional ties with it—otherwise the climate is hell and the provincialism of life would bore you to death." He deeply believed in the need for a Jewish "dwarf state" to exist, and he thought it both inevitable and on the whole a good thing that Israel would over time transform Jews into Israelis. He just didn't particularly want to be there when it happened.

In other words, Koestler was reluctant to abandon precisely that sense of ambivalence and rootlessness which he so criticized in European Jewry—and which Cesarani correctly identifies as central to his personality and his writing. He was uncomfortable in Israel; he could hardly take refuge in religion or community; and the option of a Holocaust-driven sense of Jewish affirmation was simply not open to him. This is Cesarani's biggest mistake, to suppose that the sensibilities and the concerns of Jews today should have been those of a Jew of Koestler's generation.

Koestler thought and wrote about the Nazi destruction of the Jews of Europe, and his sense of the necessity of Israel was deeply informed by that experience. But—and in this respect he was representative of most Jewish intellectuals of his time—the Holocaust was not and could not be a consideration in his own identity. That would come later, much later. In the two decades following 1945, the years of Koestler's greatest prominence and public engagement, Jews and non-Jews alike paid only occasional attention to Auschwitz and its implications.

It makes no sense to write of a twentieth-century Hungarian Jew—whose formative experiences were the secularized Jewish worlds of Budapest and Vienna; who passed through all the major political upheavels of the interwar years; whose overwhelming postwar preoccupation was the Communist threat and whose elective milieu was the urban intelligentsia of continental Western Europe—as though he should have shaped his life and works by the light of the Shoah, and to suggest that if he failed to do so he was engaging in a massive exercise in denial and repression. For it is surely not his Jewishness, nor even his failure to live up to other people's expectations for a Jew, that makes Arthur Koestler interesting or significant.

IV.

WHAT DOES MATTER, of course, is *Darkness at Noon*, first published in 1940. This was Koestler's most enduring book and his most influential contribution to the century. In France alone it sold 420,000 copies in the first decade after the war. It has never been out of print in half a dozen languages, and it is widely credited with having made a singular and unequaled contribution to exploding the Soviet myth. It made Koestler a rich and famous man, and if he had not written it we would not now be reading his biography. Any assessment of Arthur Koestler's standing must rest on our reading of this book and its impact.

The story is well known. Koestler mixed his own experience of the death cell in Spain with his personal knowledge of Karl Radek and Nikolai Bukharin (both of whom he had met in Moscow) and produced the story of Nicholas Salmanovitch Rubashov, an old Bolshevik who has fallen victim to the Stalinist purges. The book was written between 1938 and 1940, and Koestler could draw on wide public awareness of the recent Moscow trials, the setting for his study of the dilemma of Communist fealty and disillusion. Rubashov is an amalgam, but also a type: the Bolshevik activist who has suppressed his own opinions and judgment in favor of those of the Party and the Leader, only to find that he now stands accused of having "objectively" opposed the Party line, and thus the Grand Narrative of History.

There is no plot as such—the outcome is inevitable. But before he is executed Rubashov engages in introspective reflections upon his loyalties and his motives. More importantly, he takes part in a series of exchanges with his interrogators. In these conversations Koestler reproduces not just the official charges made against the accused at the show trials, but also the moral and political logic behind them. History and Necessity, Means and Ends, intuitive reason and dialectical logic: these are all invoked and explicated in the great disputations in the novel, as first Ivanov, and then Gletkin seeks to convince Rubashov that he should confess for the higher good of the Party.

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A part of the novel's appeal was that it captured and confirmed a popular understanding of how communism worked and what was wrong with it. Even a neo-Trotskyist critic such as Irving Howe, who thought the book paid insufficient attention to the social context of Stalinism, conceded that it was an unimpeachable and terrifying depiction of the workings of the Communist mind. Above all, *Darkness at Noon* functioned with extraordinary effectiveness at two quite distinct levels. For a mass audience, it presented communism as a lie and a fraud, where facts, arguments, and trials were rigged to achieve the ends sought by a ruthless dictatorial regime. But for a more discriminating intellectual readership, the book portrayed communism not just unforgivingly, but also with a curiously human face.

DESPITE ITS OBVIOUS debt to nineteenth-century Russian literature, as well as to older accounts of witch trials and the Inquisition, *Darkness at Noon* is remarkably benign as a depiction of prison and interrogation. There are no scenes of torture. There is hardly any violence at all. The message is clear and explicitly stated: unlike the Nazis and the Fascists, the Communists do not use physical torture to extract the curious confessions people make in court. Instead they convince their victims of their own guilt. The whole exercise operates at a rather rarified level of dialectical conversation, especially between Ivanov and Rubashov. Even Gletkin, the "new" man, uses threats and force only out of necessity.

Whether Koestler knew that this was utterly false is unclear. But there has long been copious evidence that Communist regimes—in the Soviet Union, in the satellite states of Eastern Europe, and elsewhere—were as brutal and bloodthirsty as other modern tyrannies. Communist dictators resorted to violence and torture no less than any other dictators. Koestler's emphasis upon dialectics rather than nightsticks suggests an almost reassuring picture of the essential rationality of communism, for all its crimes. Yet there is no doubt that he was not in the least interested in drawing a veil over communism's worst features. So what was going on?

The answer is that *Darkness at Noon* is not a book about the victims of communism. It is a book about Communists. The victims—Rubashov and his fellow prisoners—are Communists. Koestler is all but silent on the famines, the expropriations, the wholesale deportations of peoples authorized by Stalin. As he would write a decade later in *The God that Failed*: "How our voices boomed with righteous indignation, denouncing flaws in the procedure of justice in our comfortable democracies; and how silent we were when our comrades, without trial or conviction, were liquidated in the Socialist sixth of the earth. Each of us carries a skeleton in the cupboard of his conscience; added together they would form galleries of bones more labyrinthine than the Paris catacombs." But the skeletons are those of Communists, mostly of Communist intellectuals. And Koestler's novel is a magnificent effort by an intellectual former Communist to explain to other intellectuals why communism persecuted its own intellectuals and why they conspired in their own humiliation.

It is also, for related reasons, an indirect apologia for Koestler's own passage through communism. The crimes and errors of communism are not denied. Quite the contrary. But they are presented as essentially intellectual deformations—logical derivations from legitimate starting points rendered fatal by the failure to take into account the individual and his capacity for independent judgment. In short, they are the sort of mistakes, however tragic and terrible, that intelligent and well-intentioned men can make when they are in thrall to great ideals. To adapt Shane's reassuring words in Jack Schaeffer's great eponymous novel, "No one need feel ashamed to be beaten by History."

FOR THIS REASON, *Darkness at Noon* seems curiously dated today. It operates entirely within its protagonists' schema. Like Rubashov, Koestler believed that "for once History had taken a run, which at last promised a more dignified form of life for mankind; now it was over." He also gives quite a lot of credit to the interrogators, who are presumed to be acting in good faith. In Gletkin's parting words: "The Party promises only one thing: after the victory, one day when it can do no more harm, the material of the secret archives will be published. Then the world will learn what was in the background of this Punch & Judy show—as you called it—which we had to act to them according to history's textbook.... And then you, and some of your friends of the younger generation, will be given the sympathy and pity which we denied you today." Koestler, of course, believes no such thing. But he believed that the Gletkins believe it. And that assumption renders the book, today, altogether less convincing as an insight into the Communist mind.

It follows from this—and this is not intended to diminish his significance—that Arthur Koestler has ceased to be a living source of ideas and has become a historical object. His greatest book is not the infallible account of its subject for which it was once taken; but it does offer a revealing insight into the limits of even the most devastating criticism of communism at mid-century. *Darkness at Noon* may have undermined the plausibility of the Soviet state, but at the price of confirming the conventional intellectual assumption that communism was nevertheless quite unlike other authoritarian regimes, and fundamentally better (or at least more interesting). This was not Koestler's intention, but he might not have disagreed.

KOESTLER'S GENIUS LAY not in his analysis of communism, but in his polemical brilliance when engaging with Communists (or Fascists) and their admirers. This, together with his journalism, is why he mattered then and matters now. He was witty—his essay on "The Little Flirts of St Germain des Près," and his vision of Parisian intellectual life under a Soviet occupation ("Les Temps héroïques," published in Paris in 1948) are not just devastating—and appropriately sexually inflected—accounts of the Left Bank fellow-travelling milieu of Sartre and his friends; they are also very funny (or "scabrous" and "malicious," in Cesarani's words).

Koestler got a lot of things right, and saw some things long before most other people. As early as 1969, reporting for the London *Sunday Times* on his travels through the postcolonial islands of the western Pacific, he foresaw both the unanticipated consequences of decolonization and the paradox of what we are now pleased to call "globalization": "mass-produced uniform culture" and ever more acute "venomous local conflicts of religion, language and race." Above all, Koestler was rather brave—he had no hesitation in facing down hostile audiences or speaking unpopular truths.

This did not endear him to many people. At the founding meeting of the Congress for Cultural Freedom in Berlin in 1950, many delegates—notably A. J. Ayer and Hugh Trevor-Roper—were quite put off by Koestler's intensity and his uncompromising tactics. His obsession with the fight against communism—like all his other obsessions—brooked no compromise and seemed to lack all proportion. But then Sidney Hook, a fellow organizer of the Congress, no less anti-Communist but often critical, rightly observed that "Koestler was capable of reciting the truths of the multiplication table in a way to make some people indignant with him."

This made Koestler an uncomfortable presence, who brought disruption and conflict in his train. But that is what

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intellectuals are for. Arthur Koestler's nonconformism—which makes him as mysterious to his biographer as he was annoying to his contemporaries and precious to his friends—is what has assured him his place in history. Below the rages and the polemics, beyond the violence and the predatory sexuality, the eccentricities and the changes of direction, there seems to have been a steady current of moral concern and political insight that charges his best writing with a lasting glow. As Thomas Fowler says of Alden Pyle in *The Quiet American*, "I never knew a man who had better motives for all the trouble he caused." ■

Making It New

By ALEX ROSS

Concerto Conversations by Joseph Kerman

(Harvard University Press, 192 pp., $24.95)

THE CONCERTO IS to music as action-adventure is to film. On an orchestral program, it is the surefire hit, the blockbuster, the audience-pleaser. Those who go regularly to subscription concerts—particularly those who go to concerts for a living—might well feel a bit of dread as the concerto approaches. More often than not, it will be Rachmaninov, Chaikovsky, or Sibelius. The soloist will probably be a swaggering Russian brat or an accurate woman of Asian descent. And, more often than not, the performance will be ordinary rather than extraordinary. Yet the audience will almost always explode with delight at the end and deliver a standing ovation to the prodigy of the hour. A friend of mine who works in the music business has threatened, as an act of intellectual protest, to rise from his seat during the umpteenth performance of the Chaikovsky Violin Concerto and blow out his brains. Many connoisseurs concur: concertos are the lowest common denominator, they serve to sell seats rather than elevate the art.

So why has Joseph Kerman—a distinguished musicologist, professor emeritus at Berkeley, a figurehead of his profession—stooped to write a book about the concerto? Granted, it is a slim book—a transcript of the Norton Lectures that Kerman delivered at Harvard during the 1997–98 academic year. But it is a serious work, not an empty virtuoso exercise or a donnish *jeu*. In the second sentence, Kerman goes so far as to speak of his love for the concerto. At this late stage of his career, the author of *Opera As Drama* and *The Beethoven Quartets* surely ought to be issuing a treatise on the *Missa Solemnis*, or a crystalline monograph on Webern's cantatas.

Instead, he is wallowing in the big chords that open Rachmaninov's Second Piano Concerto. F minor! F minor with a D-flat! F minor with a D-natural! F minor with an E-flat! F with an E-flat and an A-natural! F with an E-flat and an A-flat again! F minor with a D-natural again! F minor with a D-flat again! Now, low octaves—A-flat! F! G! And: C MINOR! It is "impressive," Kerman says. It is "shattering." The rest may be an anticlimax, but the opening never fails to amaze. Kerman declines to grow out of one of his primal musical memories.

He has not, it turns out, lost his mind. He has many subtle and surprising points to make about the concerto repertory, and not just the warhorses of Chaikovsky and Rachmaninov. You will find everything from the Bach Brandenburgs to Elliott Carter's Piano Concerto—more or less the whole spectrum of concert music. But Kerman makes a larger point simply in choosing this topic and that point of departure. He never quite says it out loud, but it is implicit throughout the book: academic musicology has lost sight of the essential pleasures of listening.

Concerto Conversations is valuable, even crucial, for its unprepossessing manner, its casual movement from one example to the next, its elegance and literateness and lucidity. No Schenker graphs here, no narratology or gender studies. The concerto is revealed not as a construction of bourgeois identity, nor as a zone of suppressed homoeroticism, but instead as a human, emotional realm in which solo and orchestral characters are engaged in various forms of conversation and conflict. Kerman manages to be both intelligent and intelligible. He writes for the bright layman, as academicians did once upon a time. His evocations of particular musical moments are immediate and magical. His gift is so uncommon as to make one sad.

The governing metaphor of the book is, in truth, neither original nor interesting in itself. The idea of the concerto as a conversation is one that is familiar from humdrum program notes at concerts. Any music for two players or more—and much solo music as well—is a kind of conversation. Are concertos more conversational than sonatas or string quartets? And should conversation really be the means or end of this or any art? If music is defined as so much dialogic chit-chat, rather than as, say, monologic revelation or metaphysical shock, it too easily devolves into a sort of literate murmur overheard in a public space. It becomes an upscale Muzak, something to read program notes by.

FORTUNATELY, THE METAPHOR of conversation is little more than an opening gambit. Kerman is equally interested in the art of virtuoso display, which isn't conversational in the least. Unlike many commentators before him, he celebrates virtuosity as a musical value: he does not idealize music as dry discourse. In this respect, he keeps up a respectful feud with Donald Tovey, the great turn-of-the-century English critic, who helped to codify what we now understand as the chief characteristics of the "classical." Up to a point, Kerman takes Tovey as a model: here was a sophisticated musical thinker who wrote cogently for a large audience, building his argument not through abstract pronouncements but through vivid blow-by-blow descriptions. Yet Tovey deplored the messy, self-indulgent side of the concerto form; in particular, he condemned the development of the solo cadenza as "the saddest chapter in the story of the concerto"—as a "poltergeist in the stately home of Classical music," to use Kerman's paraphrase. Kerman, by contrast, cherishes the soloist's rants, soliloquies, and meditations, which disrupt the politesse of classical dialogue.

Kerman does not automatically gravitate toward the obvious monuments of the concerto repertory, the classical and neoclassical masterpieces of Mozart, Beethoven, and Brahms. Instead he leads off with Rachmaninov, and later he lavishes attention on the Chaikovsky Violin Concerto. My friend who threatens a kamikaze strike against the Chaikovksy might put off his act for a few months

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after reading what Kerman has to say about it. His reconsideration of Chaikovsky owes something to the work of Richard Taruskin, another great Berkeley musicologist, who in these pages several years ago exposed anti-Chaikovsky sentiment as rote Germanophile chauvinism. But Kerman does not say simply that Chaikovsky was just as good a symphonic thinker as his Germanic competitors and detractors. He says that Chaikovsky possessed particular virtues as a writer of concertos, and that this talent sometimes took the form of a kind of satire on symphonic form itself.

KERMAN BEGINS WITH a conventional polarity: the soloist as a feminine voice and the orchestra as a masculine one. But the woman is dominant, the man subservient. At the beginning of the piece, the orchestra acts as an "advance man," delivering introductory flourishes. "The solo can now enter," Kerman writes, "like a prima donna with a flourish, a pirouette, and a self-serving mini-cadenza before singing the aria that she was called in for in the first place." He reads the violinist as an independent, freewheeling voice and the orchestra as a buttoned-up, subservient one.

Later,

> [t]he orchestra plays a martial theme—not a new theme, but a masculinized version of what I referred to as the violin's aria. The aria mutates into a polonaise, symbol of the courtly and the majestic, a marker of Chaikovsky's imperial style, as Richard Taruskin calls it. Then the orchestra starts to develop the polonaise theme; the development section is getting underway.... Development is sharply rejected by the solo.... The violin, after wagging her finger at the orchestra, settles in to a light-hearted, frilly variation of the orchestra's own theme—a rather startling evocation of the coloratura variations that were the staple of nineteenth-century divas, Jenny Lind singing variations on "The Last Rose of Summer," and the like. This place positively drips contempt for the orchestra's intellectual pretensions. The violin as MINX.

This passage, with its moment-by-moment metaphorical description, follows the classic form of program-note writing as it has been handed down from Tovey. But at every turn its metaphors are more cutting, its perceptions more energetic. More is at stake. Chaikovksy's concerto is not polite conversation; it is a clash of personalities, emotions, styles, even ideologies.

The book delivers many such charged encounters. Of a sardonic-Baroque passage in Stravinsky's Concerto for Piano and Winds, Kerman says that "Stravinsky tips his hat to Vivaldi, and gives him the finger at the same time." A moment in which the piano and orchestra chew over the same material in Mozart's D-Minor Piano Concerto reminds him of rival pit bulls. A chapter on "textures"—the blending of the solo voice with voices in the orchestra—culminates unexpectedly in a paean to Bach's Third Brandenburg Concerto, and instead of celebrating the counterpoint Kerman lavishes his attention on the orchestration. Bach's writing, he finds, is "kaleidoscopic," "pulsating," "vertiginous," "sensuous." Such words would have been unsurprising in a discussion of Ravel, but they are a bit of a shock in a commentary on Bach. One won't listen to the piece in the same way again.

WHAT HAPPENED TO the concerto in the last hundred years? How did it become, in some way, intellectually suspect? This is the story that the latter half of Kerman's book tells. After Beethoven, composers increasingly sought mighty, high-cultural roles, and the concerto—the playground of virtuosity—was either revamped as a "serious" genre or discredited altogether. The tendency toward anti-virtuoso thinking first crops up in Beethoven's *Emperor* Concerto. In this work, Kerman writes, Beethoven "virtually killed the cadenza." At the point in the first movement where a cadenza would traditionally appear, Beethoven wrote out a solo statement that was simply a foreshortened version of cadenza-like material heard at the outset of the piece. The cadenza was absorbed into a new kind of grand symphonic plot. The composer, in a sense, had gained the upper hand. He had "co-opted"—in Kerman's phrase—the soloist's tendency toward disruptive improvisatory display by scripting all of his gestures in advance. As a consolation prize, Beethoven gave the soloist a bigger, heroic sound than he had ever had before. Lisztian double octaves, the *ne plus ultra* of pianistic virtuosity, have their origin in the clattering opening measures of the *Emperor*.

The improvised cadenza died out, and the concerto became more "composed," more symphonic. Brahms completed the process by writing a Second Piano Concerto that was essentially a four-movement symphony with running pianistic commentary. Many pianists name the Brahms Second as the most taxing of all concertos—not only because of its purely technical difficulties, but also because the difficulties are seldom evident to the audience. In the second movement, for example, Brahms asks the pianist to play octaves in both hands at low volume; this is even more difficult than playing double octaves at high volume, yet it will never rouse the audience to fits of enthusiasm. And even in the more traditional Romantic concertos of Chaikovsky and Rachmaninov—in which double octaves come fast and furious—the piano is not as spontaneously distinct from the orchestra as it was in Mozart's time. Kerman observes that the Steinway grand pianos of the late nineteenth century were little orchestras in themselves, and, paradoxically, they blended with the orchestra more than they stood apart from it.

SO THE HEROIC dichotomies of the Romantic era became blurred as the twentieth century rolled around. In the final chapter of his book, Kerman surveys the twentieth-century landscape, and he concentrates, too predictably, on what he calls "concertos of lamentation"—those in which tragic themes come to the fore. He singles out Berg's Violin Concerto, with its dissonant, unraveling lyricism; Elgar's Cello Concerto, with its hypnotic self-pity; and Elliott Carter's Piano Concerto, with its scenes of barely contained violence. This is the weakest section of the book, not only because its analyses are more vague and hasty than those which came before—it doesn't suffice to describe the savage finale of Shostakovich's First Violin Concerto as "short and rather unfortunate"—but also because it overlooks some alternative paths that the concerto took as the twentieth century went its merry way. The pieces that Kerman names are the end of the Romantic line; in them, the co-optation of the soloist became complete. There is something inherently un-tragic, I think, about the concerto as a form: cadenzas and lamentation do not go hand in hand. In making the concerto a tragic form, composers threatened to suck the life out of it once and for all.

But Kerman seems to miss the second strain in twentieth-century music, the comedic one, which sprang up in the gnomic jokes of Richard Strauss and Ferruccio Busoni. Strauss's *Burlesque*, a delicious satire of Brahms, is mentioned not at all, and Busoni's carnivalesque Concerto for Piano, Orchestra, and Male Choir—a bonfire of musical vanities—shows up only as a passing oddity. The postwar inventions of Olivier Messiaen, György Ligeti, and Alfred Schnittke, in which traditional solo roles are subject to wild, witty variations, do not appear. There is a paragraph on Carl Nielsen's bitingly playful Flute Concerto, but the book would have profited from a broader discussion of Nielsen's three concertos, which are among the finest that the

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twentieth century produced. They exemplify everything that Kerman celebrates in concertos of the past: they bristle with action, they play the gamut of emotion, from giddiness to rage, and they show a high wit that is precious in a century too solemn by half. Instead we have a panegyric to the Carter concerto, which, in its atmosphere of overbearing dread, now seems of a piece with the air-raid drills of the 1950s.

To argue with Kerman's taste, however, is to participate in the general spirit of his project. He invites disagreement even as he states his proud positions. His book is one side of an excellent conversation. Let us be sophisticated, he says, but not too serious. At the end, in a meditation on Frank Kermode's phrase "the sense of an ending," he shrugs off all dire predictions of the imminent demise of classical music. He believes that the music will adapt out of necessity to new cultures and technologies. If the concerto has become a stale ritual on subscription programs—and honestly it hasn't, as Martha Argerich's Dionysiac, riot-inducing revels at the keyboard demonstrate—it can retain all of its spontaneity and surprise on recordings. Kerman keeps faith in the idea of the active, intelligent listener, who can scarcely sit still for all the visceral excitement happening in front of him. He takes it for granted that you listen as he does. First out of guilt, and then out of pleasure, you take up the challenge. ■

CORRESPONDENCE

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direct an action epic, and then kick back for history's most confusing Oscar race.

ROBERT PATRICK
Los Angeles, California

Marital discord

TO THE EDITORS:

Your editorial "Separate but Equal?" is both outstanding and courageous (January 10). It is no surprise to this reader that such enlightened thought on the subject of gay marriage should be heralded by THE NEW REPUBLIC. What is surprising and a source of continuing dismay is the cultural myopia that blinds the American public to the clear historical parallels you cite in this article. Perhaps such willful ignorance will always be part of the social evolutionary cycle. Still, on the eve of the third millennium, it is startling to comprehend the magnitude of injustice perpetrated on so many by the denial of such a fundamental human right. More alarming still is the indifference expressed by the tyrannical majority. Perhaps your prophetic voice will encourage your meeker competitors finally to do the right thing and speak out against this last accepted form of bigotry.

THOMAS NIEL
Lafayette, Louisiana

TO THE EDITORS:

While I agree that the distinction between gender-concordant "domestic partnerships" and gender-discordant marriage should not be a surrogate for "separate but equal," the solution you propose is inappropriate.

Most people (including myself) were married in a church, not in a government office. Marriage is a religious institution that, in the Judeo-Christian tradition, involves religious recognition of a gender-discordant couple who have decided to form a permanent monogamous relationship. For years, government has put its seal of approval on what is essentially a religious function. This has not only discriminated against same-sex couples but also forced others (e.g., Mormons) to alter their practices to conform to the Judeo-Christian concept of marriage. Fewer people are opting for marriage, and, in some jurisdictions, most children are born out of wedlock.

The concept of domestic partnership provides government with the opportunity to exit the marriage business altogether while providing a nondiscriminatory alternative to those seeking to cement their relationships. The government would leave religious institutions to recognize marriage in a manner they deem appropriate while focusing on its own interests in establishing domestic partnerships. These interests include ensuring that children achieve their fullest potential, minimizing the chance that parents or children will become wards of the state, and facilitating intergenerational transitions. Open minds must consider whether such partnerships should be limited to only two people and whether monogamy within the partnership is necessary. This process would be completely independent of religious marriage, and religions seeking to enforce more stringent restrictions could easily do so with contracts.

Uniform, nondiscriminatory domestic partnerships would be far preferable to deepening government's inappropriate entanglement in the inherently religious institution of marriage.

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Portable

I COME FROM A TOWN WHOSE name means "the door," and four years ago I walked through it. LaPorte is a town of some 20,000 people in northwest Indiana, about an hour outside Chicago. In this community of predominantly blue-collar, middle-class Americans, on one of the town's many lakes, I grew up. It was a sheltered, inward-looking, wonderful place. I don't think we ever locked the door of our house during the day, and we certainly never looked nervously over our shoulders on the street at night.

OUR AMUSEMENTS WERE WHOLESOME and basic. In the winter I would clear the snow from our frozen lake for ice-skating. The spring brought flocks of geese and ducks, along with their sweet and silly offspring. During the summer we swam and water-skied. Autumns were especially lovely—the crisp air perfumed with the smell of burning leaves. Weekends were spent attending whatever event happened to be taking place at LaPorte High, the town's one high school. The only other draws in LaPorte were the local Burger King and the one movie theater, which charged $1.50. July 4 brought the big parade (and if you were anyone, you were in the parade). A few weeks later came the LaPorte County Fair, where you could get almost anything edible deep-fried on a stick.

TRADITIONAL FAMILY VALUES WERE the norm in LaPorte. The men went to work and the women stayed home and took care of the children. My mother was my model. She devoted her life to raising my three siblings and me. She did without little luxuries for herself so that we could enjoy the latest toys and clothes that we just couldn't live without. She was an inexhaustible source of comfort. And I was trained to continue her way in the world.

I ACCEPTED THIS TRAINING WITHOUT complaint but with one modification: I didn't want to stay in Indiana. I bided my time. I went to college in Indiana, and after graduation I married an Indiana man. I even remained in Indiana until my husband finished law school. But then we left. It wasn't that I wanted to overthrow the life that I had inherited—not exactly. I certainly wanted to have children, and it was my intention to bring them up as I had been brought up—but not *where* I had been brought up, not in Indiana. I wanted broader horizons.

MY MOTHER HAD RESERVATIONS. "Don't let the city change you. Remember your values and what's important to you," she counseled as I packed for the move to Washington, D.C. My mother had a particular trouble in mind. She was cautioning me, indirectly but unmistakably, against becoming a career woman. This was my parting instruction from her: Being a good wife and a stay-at-home mom are the important things in life. Wifehood and motherhood—those should be my careers. But her admonitions struck me as unnecessary. The city, change me? Not to worry. I wasn't rebelling; I was only moving. All I wanted was a larger version of my childhood life: the values of LaPorte, but on a bigger and more interesting stage.

IN THE CITY, I FOUND WHAT I WAS looking for. There was an energy to Washington that was almost unimaginable in small-town Indiana. And there were so many differences. The question of children was not discussed among people my age; there were not many people my age who were married. I threw myself into my new life. I loved my job; I even enjoyed the infamous commute into the city. The streets of Washington never failed to stir me. It was not long before I felt completely at home. Having children right away didn't seem as important as the next party or the next charity function.

TWO YEARS AFTER WE MOVED HERE, I became pregnant. We were thrilled. My first thoughts were of being a stay-at-home mom. My upbringing rushed in on me, and everything that I had been feeling about my job and the city, the cherished sensation of unlimited possibility, vanished. I was going to be a mother, and my place was in the home. LaPorte came alive in my heart. For nine months I tried to economize and to work out a plan for us to live off my husband's salary alone. We would do it the way we were taught to do it. The city, change us?

BUT, NO MATTER HOW I CRUNCHED the numbers, I saw that we wouldn't be able to make it by the old rules. The reality of my tradition was not the only reality. I had to keep working. When my son was born, I resigned myself to the fact that there would be only three months in which I could spend every second of every day with him, before I took my place in the selfish, guilt-ridden ranks of working mothers. I was convinced that my son was going to suffer horribly, and I was perfectly prepared to blame myself for the consequences.

AND THEN CAME THE GREAT SURPRISE. What started as something that I had to do became something that I wanted to do. My awakening began rudely, with a crisis of confidence in my maternal abilities. I discovered that I lacked the patience I thought I would have with an infant. When he wasn't sleeping, he was crying. What on earth had I gotten myself into? Of course, when he looked up at me with a trusting smile, it was all instantly worth it. Still, when the time came to go back to work, I felt relief. And also anxiety: This daughter of LaPorte was ready to commit her baby to somebody else's daily care.

MY PRAYERS WERE ANSWERED IN THE form of Lucy. She is a middle-aged Peruvian woman who lives four houses down the street. I heard about her through a neighbor and showed up one morning on her doorstep, my son in my arms and a look of desperation on my face. Lucy invited me in, took my little son from me, and started asking me all kinds of questions. I felt as if she were interviewing me. But the remarkable thing was that my son, who usually cried when held by strangers, was content in Lucy's arms. And that was all that mattered. Since that day, Lucy has taken my son into her home and made him a part of her family. It is perfectly clear to me that he gets more from Lucy than I could give him if I were to stay home.

THERE ARE DAYS WHEN I FEEL GUILTY about my satisfaction with these arrangements. And there are days when I feel wounded. It is hard to watch your child cling to another woman and cry when you come to take him home. I came very close to quitting my job. But now my son is a little older and he understands what's going on. He knows who his real mommy is, and I don't think of quitting anymore. His well-being is obvious to me. He is a happy child because of the way he is being raised. Every day I watch my son run into the arms of another woman, every day I listen as they converse delightfully in Spanish—and I know I have made the right decision not only for me but also for my family. The city *has* changed me, but I am a better woman and a better mother for it.

HOPE ROBERTS

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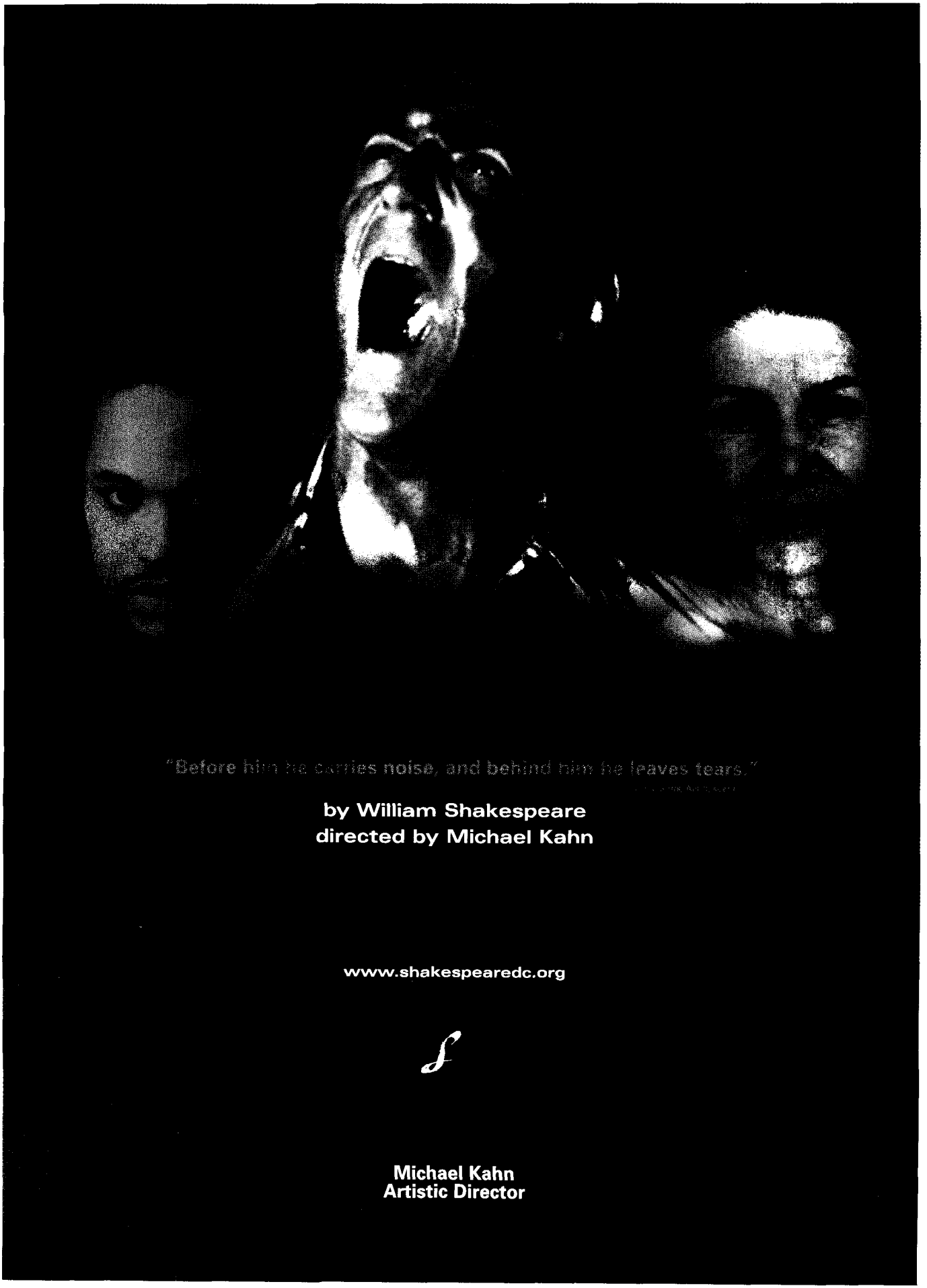

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